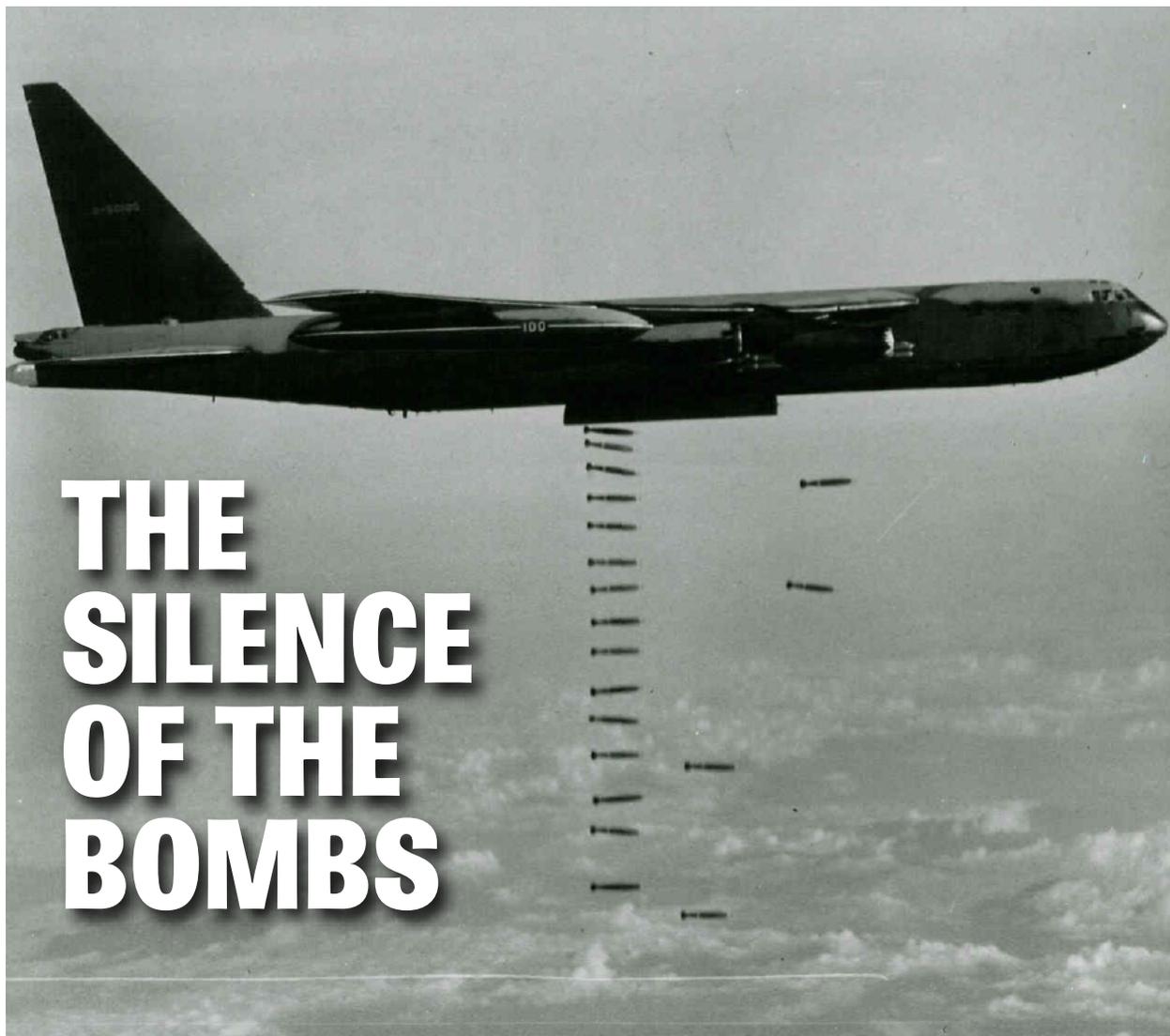

INSIDE: CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS WAR IS STILL GOING ON? ● 40 BAD YEARS FOR ISRAEL ● HOW NOT TO COUNTER TERROR ● MYSTERY WOMAN OF JAKARTA

The ^{ColdType} READER

WRITING WORTH READING ● ISSUE 16 ● JULY 2007



THE SILENCE OF THE BOMBS

 **NORMAN SOLOMON ON THE TRAGIC ECHO OF A PREVIOUS WAR**

ColdType The READER



ISSUE 16 | JULY 2007

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Tony Sutton
editor@coldtype.net

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A camouflaged B-52 releases its 60,000-pound load of bombs over a target in Vietnam

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CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS WAR IS STILL GOING ON?

BY JIM HIGHTOWER

** 3,300 American troops and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis are dead.*

** Rumsfeld said the Iraq attack would cost \$50 billion. The tab so far exceeds \$500 billion.*

** Almost two million Iraqis have fled the country and only 30% of kids can go to school.*

On Easter Morning, George W. made another of his periodic shows of Standing With The Troops. He attended church services in the chapel at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, after which he offered to the assembled media this pious little announcement: "I had a chance to reflect on the great sacrifice that our military and their families are making. I prayed for their safety. I prayed for their strength and comfort. And I pray for peace."

He prayed for our troops' safety? How clueless is he? George, you have the troops stuck in another country's vicious civil war. They're under attack from every direction by every faction, every hour of every day, hit by car

bombs, roadside bombs, chlorine bombs, IEDs, suicide bombs, rocket fire, mortar rounds, snipers, and assassins. There is no safety in Iraq.

He prayed for peace? George, YOU made this war. Don't put it on God! The ONLY reason that America is in Iraq is because you, "Buckshot" Cheney, Rummy, and the rest rode us into an invasion and occupation on a pack of lies.

God didn't do this, YOU did. Praying won't get it done. God helps those who help themselves. You have peace in your own hands.

Yet the war goes on

Only three days after George the Pious told us about his prayers for safety, strength, comfort, and peace, his Pentagon chief, Robert Gates, announced that all active-duty soldiers already in Iraq or going there will have their tours of duty extended from 12 months to 15. "Our forces are stretched," Gates admitted, but he said that this added burden is "necessary" in order to carry out Bush's latest war strategy, his

The ONLY reason that America is in Iraq is because you, "Buckshot" Cheney, Rummy, and the rest rode us into an invasion and occupation on a pack of lies

BUSH'S HYPOCRISY

To add insult to injury, after saying that he had prayed for the "comfort" of these soldiers and their families, Bush didn't even have the courtesy to inform them in advance that the extension was coming

"surge" scheme. The extension order affects 100,000 soldiers. Plus their families. Bear in mind that many of these families have already gone through two or three tours in Iraq.

Back at Fort Hood, where Bush prayed, families were angry. "A year is so long apart you hardly know your husband," said Nichol Spencer. "Now they're making it longer?"

Theresa White said, "To a civilian, three months is 12 weeks. To an army wife, three months is the straw that broke the camel's back."

Of course, that's three more months in hell that Bush is committing these people to endure (this from a guy who could not even complete an Easy Street tour of duty stateside in the "champagne unit" of the Air National Guard during the Vietnam War). To add insult to injury, after saying that he had prayed for the "comfort" of these soldiers and their families, Bush didn't even have the courtesy to inform them in advance that the extension was coming. "It was disrespectful," said Mindy Shanahan, also from Fort Hood. Her husband is in Iraq and will now be stuck there an extra three months, assuming he survives. "We should have had at least 48 hours notice, instead of having to see this on CNN," she said.

Prolonging the time soldiers must spend in Iraq hides one of the military's other little problems: Very few Americans want to join Bush's war. Not even those young Republicans who say they so enthusiastically support the war are willing to bet their lives on it. So, in a country of 300 million citizens, recruiters are straining to meet a quota of

roughly 80,000 new soldiers a year, much less find more troops to cycle into Bush's surge. The military has already raised the maximum enlistment age from 35 to 42, which means that if you and your wife had kids when you were 20 and you're now 40, the whole family could go to war. Wow – the Brady Bunch does Iraq!

Despite doubling the number of felons permitted to enlist and lowering the minimum standards so more high-school dropouts and people with low mental-aptitude scores can be taken, the Pentagon still is not getting enough volunteers. Even recent West Point graduates, the Army's elite, are saying "no thanks" to Iraq, choosing to leave active-duty service at the highest rate in more than three decades.

Yet, the war goes on

Bush's war, now in its fifth year, has already lasted longer than World War II. On Easter Sunday, as George was saying his prayers, the number of American military deaths in Iraq was approaching 3,300. And now, with his surge, the rate of U.S. deaths is on the rise. All this killing has prompted more eloquence from the commander-in-chief: "Make no mistake about it. I understand how tough it is. I talk to families who die."

Then there are some 24,000 soldiers who haven't died but instead have come home maimed and traumatized, including more than 1,300 who've lost arms and/or legs, and more than 4,600 who've suffered severe head or brain injuries. Many of them have been sent to the "comfort" of Walter Reed Army

Medical Center, just a short hop from Bush's hangout at the White House. There they have been greeted with horrific conditions and cold indifference.

When news of this scandal broke, Bush feigned surprise and expressed obligatory outrage. But, wait, George – you're the president, you're in charge of this disgrace! It's your Pentagon budget (now above half-a-trillion dollars a year) that has been lavishing money on favored contractors while quietly snipping away at funding for Walter Reed. A review panel concluded last month that your Pentagon was aware of this neglect, yet it still cut funds even as the hospital was being inundated with thousands of severely maimed soldiers returning from Iraq. The panel said the hospital is now beyond repair.

It's not just Walter Reed, either. The nationwide VA system is overwhelmed with patients and experiencing crucial shortages in staff and facilities. As of January, there was a backlog of 600,000 vets awaiting care – nearly a third of whom have been waiting six months or longer. All this on your watch, George – while you've been demanding that war critics "support our troops." Meanwhile, your current budget proposal reduces funding for veterans' care in 2009 and 2010 – just when the military expects that the influx of wounded will peak.

Yet, the war goes on

Asked in January 2003 what the price tag was for the Bushites' upcoming Iraq attack and occupation, Donny Rumsfeld said that the budget office forecast "a number that's something under \$50

billion."

Not quite right. Iraq is now costing us \$6 billion a month (the surge will be extra), and total direct costs through this year will top \$500 billion. Included in that is \$12 billion that was airlifted in 2003 to the interim Iraqi government in shrinkwrapped stacks of \$100 bills (the load weighed 363 tons) and promptly disappeared. Poof...gone!

Add in such indirect costs as veterans' long-term health care and replacement of the military hardware consumed by the war, and the tab runs to \$1.2 trillion or more. David Leonhardt, a New York Times economic analyst, has itemized some other things we could've bought with that sum instead of the mess in Iraq. His list includes:

- * *TEN YEARS of universal health care, covering every American who is now without it.*
- * *DOUBLING the cancer research budget.*
- * *GLOBAL IMMUNIZATION of the world's children against measles, whooping cough, tetanus, TB, polio, and diphtheria.*
- * *UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL for every 3- and 4-year-old child in America.*
- * *RECONSTRUCTION of New Orleans.*
- * *IMPLEMENTATION of all of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations.*

Yet, the war goes on

Being positive is one thing, but George W has gone from positive to delusional. Last year, in a rhetorical reach to claim that things were looking up in Iraq, he offered this: "I think – tide turning. See,

When news of this scandal broke, Bush feigned surprise and expressed obligatory outrage. But, wait, George – you're the president, you're in charge of this disgrace!

BUSH'S HYPOCRISY

While Bush brags that his war has liberated women, in reality there has been an explosion of violence against them, including widespread abductions, public beatings, rapes, "honor killings," torture, beheadings, and public hangings

as I remember – I was raised in the desert, but tides kind of – it's easy to see the tide turn."

He might ask the Iraqi people about tide-turning progress in his war. Outside of Baghdad's four-square-mile fortress known as the Green Zone, where the U.S. brass and Iraqi political elite reside, life is miserable. Violence erupts constantly and unpredictably, fear is everyone's companion, jobs are scarce, going anywhere is dangerous, basic services are practically nonexistent, and distrust, frustration, and anger rule.

An official UN count puts last year's death toll of innocent Iraqi civilians at 34,452 – three times higher than the U.S. had admitted. Another 36,685 were wounded. One analysis puts the civilian death toll much higher – a total of 655,000 since the invasion.

Some 2 million Iraqis (16% of the population) have fled the country, including 40% of professionals (one third of doctors fled, 2,000 have been murdered). Three thousand people a day are fleeing – so many that Saudi Arabia (Bush's superrich ally in his war) is building a 560-mile fence to keep them out. By the way, the U.S. allowed only 202 Iraqi refugees into our country last year.

Another 1.6 million Iraqis are displaced within their country, forced from their homes by various factions in the civil/religious war. Many of these are children. Only 30% of Iraqi children attended school last year (pre-war, nearly 100% percent were in school). Children routinely witness violence and killings that are often gruesome, including see-

ing family and friend die. A recent study of 2,500 grade school children in Baghdad found that 70% showed symptoms of trauma.

While Bush brags that his war has liberated women, in reality there has been an explosion of violence against them, including widespread abductions, public beatings, rapes, "honor killings," torture, beheadings, and public hangings. The president of the Iraqi National Council of Women goes nowhere without a bodyguard. "I started with 6," she said, "then I increased to 12, and then to 20, and then to 30." One of the women in Iraq's parliament said bluntly, "This is the worst time ever in Iraqi women's lives."

Yet, the war goes on

Lest we forget in the foggy mist of Bush's rationales for his war (WMDs! al Qaeda connections! Democracy for the people!), Iraq sits atop the world's second-largest oil reserve. The proven reserves are 112 billion barrels, with a probable pool in excess of 400 billion barrels. At current prices, that's about \$25 trillion worth of crude.

When certain outrageous commentators (like me) suggested at the start of the war's build-up that an oil grab could be involved, Rumsfeld barked to the media, "It has nothing to do with oil, literally nothing to do with oil." Could that have been another Bushite lie?

Yes. Big Oil has long wanted to get its hands on Iraq's vast reserves. In a 1998 speech, Chevron's CEO said, "I'd love Chevron to have access." Big Oil's wish is Bush's command, and as early

as December 2002, just before the invasion, the state department's oil-and-energy working group was saying that Iraq "should be opened to international oil companies as quickly as possible after the war."

In 2004 Bush & Company drafted a secret legislative proposal to deliver this national treasure to the oil giants. This February, the proposal was introduced to the Iraqi parliament, and now the Bushites, oil lobbyists, and a handful of Iraqi pols are urgently trying to pass it.

This law would transform Iraq's oil reserves from a nationally owned resource to a privatization model, opening two thirds of the known oil fields (and all fields discovered in the future) to control by Big Oil. Instead of having Iraq's parliament make the major decisions over oil, an unelected authority called the Federal Oil and Gas Council would take charge. And guess who would have seats on the council? The major oil corporations!

This autocratic group would then decide who gets the contracts to extract the nation's oil. That means Big Oil would be approving its own bids! Also, the corporations would not have to hire Iraqis, reinvest profits in Iraq, or share new technologies. Foreign interests would even be allowed to divvy up the territory now, hold their pieces of the action until after the current civil war settles down, and then move in to grab profits.

Yet, the war goes on

If you think that maybe our self-anointed "war president" is in over his head, ponder this bit of strategic insight

from George: "No question that the enemy has tried to spread sectarian violence. They use violence as a tool to do that."

Uh, yeah...and it seems to be working. Bush's surge strategy is intended to concentrate our forces in Baghdad to rid the capital of violence. But since the surge began, residents have not noticed any lull in the carnage, instead experiencing a record number of car bombings. On April 12, the Green Zone itself got a wake-up call when a suicide bomber detonated himself in the parliament's cafeteria, killing three lawmakers and five others.

Meanwhile, knowing that the U.S. surge was coming and would last for only a few months, the deadly Shiite militias based in Baghdad have simply stood down to wait out Bush. With U.S. and Iraqi forces surging in Baghdad, the bloodshed has spread to the countryside. In late March, for example, two massive truck bombs ripped through the town market in Tal Afar, killing 48. In response, Shiite militia went on a revenge spree against Sunni residents, killing some 60 of them.

Then there's the Kurdish zone in the north, which had been rather calm ... until now. The Iraqi constitution cobbled together by the Bushites a couple of years ago contains a provision requiring a referendum on the future of the region's capital city, Kirkuk. Now, because two sides want to control this wealthy city, a new front has opened in the Iraq war.

On one side are the Kurds, who have set up their own essentially autonomous government in the north

Meanwhile, knowing that the U.S. surge was coming and would last for only a few months, the deadly Shiite militias based in Baghdad have simply stood down to wait out Bush

BUSH'S HYPOCRISY

Yes, Bush and Cheney are boneheads, and the Democratic leadership has Jello in its spine, but what did you expect?

and have well-armed, battle-seasoned militias ready to fight for the land they claim as their own. Opposing them are the Arabs, who were moved into the Kurdish zone by Saddam Hussein years ago but now consider it to be theirs. They are also heavily armed and – follow the bouncing ball here – they are backed by the government of neighboring Turkey, which is fighting a Kurdish independence movement inside its own borders.

Literally underlying this explosive ethnic imbroglio is one of the world's largest oil reserves, which means Big Oil also has a keen interest in “winning” – whatever that involves. To add to the nasty potential, Iran cares very much about this fight and has deployed security forces to the border it shares with the Kurdish zone.

The government in Baghdad, under enormous pressure (aka blackmail) from Kurdish legislators, has just decided to back the Kurds' claim – and the Arab side in Kirkuk is already setting off bombs in Kurdish neighborhoods.

Yet, the war goes on

In a tragi-comic bit of presidential posturing, Bush assembled a dozen or so veterans, soldiers, and family members in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House for a media show on March 23. With these human “stage props” lined up behind him, George lashed out at congressional Democrats for passing a bill requiring withdrawal from Iraq next year. Without even a smile of irony, Bush called the Democ-

rats' effort “an act of political theater.”

Well, this particular withdrawal bill won't get the job done, but it's a reflection of the broad public demand to stop this horrible folly. Roughly two thirds of Americans want out of Iraq by next year, and 54% support a cutoff of funds for Bush's surge. Even the troops in Iraq want a withdrawal, for only 35% of those polled by Military Times last December said that they approve of George W's handling of the war.

Still, some progressives despair. They say that last year's elections were a clear mandate for withdrawal, but the Democrats have been weak and the killing continues, so what's the use? That's right on the facts, but totally wrong on the attitude. We made great strides last year, and we've changed the national debate on the war. Yes, Bush and Cheney are boneheads, and the Democratic leadership has Jello in its spine, but what did you expect? Popular movements have always had to muster the tenacity to overcome disappointments – and ours is no different. Come on – we've got 'em on the run! Far from being down, take energy from the gains we've made – and keep pushing on. No one is going to stop the war but us. **CT**

*From “The Hightower Lowdown,” edited by Jim Hightower and Phillip Frazer, www.hightowerlowdown.org. Jim Hightower is a national radio commentator, writer, public speaker, and author of *Thieves In High Places: They've Stolen Our Country And It's Time to Take It Back*.*

FIGHTING WORDS

BY TOM ENGELHARDT & NICK TURSE

From “mission accomplished” through those endless “turning points” and “tipping points” up to the “brink” of “the abyss” and “the precipice,” and back again, American officials, military and civilian, in Baghdad and Washington, have never spared the images or the analogies. (Do you remember when our President and Secretary of Defense, for instance, were eagerly talking about taking those “training wheels” off the Iraqi “bicycle” and letting the Iraqi child pedal on his own into Democracyland?) Reality be damned, they’ve had a remarkable way, over the last four years, of turning phrases and pretzeling language to suit their needs and the needs of a war that existed largely in their imaginations rather than on the ground. In recent months, backs against the verbal wall, these spinmeisters have begun spinning ever more wildly – mixing metaphors, grasping at rhetorical straws, and stretching credulity at every turn, if not turning point.

In an effort to analyze this latest surge of sophistry – a war of words al-

ways fought with the “home front” in mind – we’ve come up with a short quiz that places genuine quotes from actual military commanders and Washington officials alongside quotes we’ve spun from our own questionable brains. We challenge you to pick the real ones. Did an American general in Iraq liken the situation there to a pogo stick, a teeter-totter, a slinky, or a jungle gym? It’s your choice. Did George Tenet’s “slam dunk” line inspire current Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to use basketball analogies, when speaking of “security” in the Middle East, or did he flee to the football field of life?

Take this quiz and see if you can guess which quotes are too wild, or not wild enough, for the battling bureaucrats of the Bush administration.

1. At his January confirmation hearings, General David Petraeus, readying himself to command the President’s “troop surge” in Baghdad and al-Anbar Province, promised to offer Congress periodic reports on how the plan was proceeding. No dates were offered.

Did George Tenet’s “slam dunk” line inspire current Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to use basketball analogies, when speaking of “security” in the Middle East, or did he flee to the football field of life?

MATCH THE QUOTE

Typically, in a May 31st press briefing, Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, Petraeus's second-in-command in Baghdad, and the reporters questioning him, managed to use the word no less than 23 times

Within months, however, this vague promise had morphed into a specific September report to Congress and has now become a focus of endless, near-obsessional media attention and questions.

Is this September report regularly referred to as:

- A.** *A Disaster Report*
- B.** *A Regress Report*
- C.** *A Baghdad Report*
- D.** *A Progress Report*

The answer, of course, is **D**. And now that “victory” – a word the President once used 15 times in a single speech – has left the administration’s fighting language, think of “progress” as the second team of words. No matter how badly things are going, “progress” (or its lack) remains the frame of reference for U.S. officials – and for reporters asking questions. Typically, in a May 31st press briefing, Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, Petraeus’s second-in-command in Baghdad, and the reporters questioning him, managed to use the word no less than 23 times. (“We’ve made some very clear progress.... Anbar’s economic and political progress.... But progress has been made.... Every day we are making progress...”)

Now, let’s make the questions just a tad harder.

2. Spokesman for the American military command in Iraq, Brig. Gen. Kevin Bergner, was recently asked about “progress” in the “Baghdad security situation.” He responded:

- A.** *“Progress will not be like flipping a light switch – it will be gradual, it*

will be nuanced, it will be subtle.”

- B.** *“Progress is going to seem like a balky jeep. It will stall, it will kick, but sooner or later it will lurch forward.”*

- C.** *“Progress isn’t like a faucet. You can’t just turn it on and get hot water.”*

- D.** *“Progress will not be like a cruise missile. You can’t just fire and forget.”*

The answer is **A** – and, by the way, General Bergner, the last one out of Baghdad, please turn off the lights. (Oh, sorry, we never got them on in the first place.)

Now, here’s your next puzzler and it’s you against the mob.

3. Another reporter with “progress” on the brain recently asked Secretary of Defense Robert Gates whether “the pace of progress [in Iraq] is sufficient or whether in fact it looks to you like the surge will have to last longer.”

Gates responded with which of these images?

- A.** *“I don’t think that the goalpost has changed, really, at all.”*

- B.** *“I think it’s all still in the same ball park.”*

- C.** *“There is a Baghdad clock and there is a Washington clock, and the people in Washington are also going to have to take into account the Washington clock.... Our military commanders should not have to worry about the Washington clock. That’s for us in Washington to worry about.”*

If you guessed **A**, congratulations, you’re right! Of course, if you guessed

either **B** or **C**, you're still right. Gates used them all in the same press briefing on the same subject.

4. Actually, our Secretary of Defense seems to love sports imagery. Recently, explaining why a "long-term U.S. military presence" in the oil heartlands of the planet was crucial, Gates used which of the following sports analogies?

- A.** *"It's important to remember that the September re-assessment is only the seventh-inning stretch, not the bottom of the ninth. Using the Korea model as a guide, we might even go into extra innings. We might be in Iraq until at least the bottom of the 15th."*
- B.** *"It's important to defend this country on the extremists' 10-yard line and not our 10-yard line"*
- C.** *"It's important for Team USA to win on the road in Iraq and Afghanistan – and we can't allow the Bin Laden blitz to get into our back-field again."*
- D.** *"It's important for the insurgents to learn that we're the Harlem Globetrotters and they're the Washington Generals. I mean, of course they're not the literally the Washington Generals. My generals are the Washington generals, but also the Globetrotters. Well, you know what I mean."*

By a process of elimination, you should have quickly reduced this foursome to a twosome. Neither baseball, nor basketball is smash-mouth enough for the Global Analogy – War against Terrorism and, in any case, for America's top officials, football has always been

war (and vice-versa). So the answer is **B**.

5. And how about our military surge leader, General Petraeus, in Baghdad? He's been fretting about progress too. But what image did he reach for to make his point?

- A.** *"We're in a horse race now. And our horse in Baghdad is simply slower than Washington's. We better figure out how to spike its oats fast."*
- B.** *"I learned at Princeton that there are many ways to measure progress. As you know you can actually progress backward, and backward progress is progress just the same. The important thing is to keep progressing, whether forward or backward, which we are doing, and in doing so we're showing the terrorists we're making progress and that, in itself, is progress."*
- C.** *"Clearly, we're in the pit and Washington's the pendulum and we better figure out how to climb out quick before the next IED goes off."*
- D.** *"We're racing against the clock, certainly. We're racing against the Washington clock, the London clock, a variety of other timepieces up there, and we've got to figure out how to speed up the Baghdad clock."*

Since these turn out to be the months of onrushing clock analogies, if you guessed **D**, you're ticking right along. General Petraeus was evidently the first one to wind up that clock image and set the alarm. It now has all Washington on the clock.

Neither baseball, nor basketball is smash-mouth enough for the Global Analogy – War against Terrorism and, in any case, for America's top officials, football has always been war (and vice-versa)

MATCH THE QUOTE

Just a couple of days after Garver made his comment, Deputy Director for Regional Operations, Joint Chiefs of Staff Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins said of the surge at a Pentagon news briefing: "So, you know, it's going to get harder before we make it – or it gets any easier"

6. U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad Lt. Col. Christopher C. Garver, facing the news that, according to the Washington Post, "May was the third-deadliest month for American troops in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, and the casualties reported over the past few days indicate that the insurgency shows no sign of abating," had what response?

- A.** "The road to ruin is paved with cement."
- B.** "When the tough get going, the going gets easier."
- C.** "This is going to get harder before it gets easier."
- D.** "This is going to get harder before it gets harder."

Given the history of the last four years in Iraq, the answer to this one, hands down, should be **D**. But reality and history are so overrated! If you guessed **C**, you were right on the mark. (By the way, few of the examples in this quiz are unique. For instance, just a couple of days after Garver made his comment, Deputy Director for Regional Operations, Joint Chiefs of Staff Brig. Gen. Perry Wiggins said of the surge at a Pentagon news briefing: "So, you know, it's going to get harder before we make it – or it gets any easier.")

7. In that same May 31st press briefing, General Odierno (his official title is: Commander, Multinational Corps-Iraq) was asked the following question: "General, it's Lolita Baldor with the Associated Press. You started out talking about some of the progress but also suggesting that it may take 60 to 90 days before you can see what impact

the surge is having. At that pace, do you think you will be able to make an assessment within that 60-day window or do you think it's going to take longer to assess whether or not the surge is having an impact?"

Odierno responded with which play analogy?

- A.** "It's kind of like a jungle gym. Lose your grip past the turning point and you're likely to fall and hit your head on the ground."
- B.** "It's kind of like a teeter-totter; you work your way up the teeter-totter, and when you go past the tipping point, it happens very quickly, and we've seen that out in Anbar."
- C.** "It's kind of like a pogo stick. What goes up must come down – and vice-versa. We've experienced this in Baghdad."
- D.** "It's kind of like a slinky. A surge begins slowly but as it walks down-stairs sooner or later it just springs toward the bottom."

The correct answer is: **B**. It seems the official pre-September surge assessment is that we're on a Baghdad teeter-totter, though our guess is that neighborhood playgrounds in the Iraqi capital aren't much in use these days.

8. Okay, let's up the ante here with a two-part question. One aspect of the President's "surge plan" turns out to involve the hope that the enemy's counter-surge will smash right into a wall. Literally. The U.S. military has been making plans to build giant walls around whole troubled neighborhoods in the Iraqi capital. Think of giant, grey

slabs of concrete going up around your neighborhood. What kind of place, according to the military, do you now live in?

- A. *A terrarium*
- B. *A prison*
- C. *A gated community*
- D. *A strategic hamlet*

If it were 40+ years ago and the setting were Vietnam, D would be the correct euphemism, but today the answer is **C** naturally. Just like in Southern California! And who wouldn't want to be part of such an obviously upscale living arrangement?

Of course, you can't account for the tastes of foreigners. Strangely enough, when the first wall started going up around the Sunni community of Adhamiyah, people objected vociferously, leaving surge types somewhat on the defensive. When pressed on the subject recently, how did Dr. David Kilcullen, an Australian counterterrorism expert whose current position is Senior Counterinsurgency Adviser to General Petraeus (and who also likes to term such walled-in, embattled communities "gated") sum up the ongoing project?

- A. *"It's something you do when a patient is bleeding to death. But you don't leave it there forever or it causes damage."*
- B. *"Good fences make good neighbors."*
- C. *"Something there is that doesn't love a wall."*
- D. *"Before I built a wall, I'd ask to know what I was walling in and walling out."*

Yes, indeed, the answer is **A**. Dr. Kilcullen likes to think of these walls as "tourniquets" applied to bleeding Iraq. And you guessed it, the other three lines come from Robert Frost's poem, "Mending Wall."

9. Here's another two-parter. Secretary of Defense Gates said he was not nominating Marine General Peter Pace to a second term as head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff because he thought the congressional confirmation process would be "quite contentious" and possibly a "divisive ordeal." Instead, he picked Admiral Michael G. Mullen, whose record and views, he implied, would smooth the Congressional waters. What, then, has Adm. Mullen had to say about the President's Global War on Terror?

- A. *"I may be a Navy admiral, but I don't see us up to our eyeballs in millions of terrorists for a generation. I think this has all been overblown."*
- B. *"Now is the time for sane policies that reflect a realistic assessment of the situation. With all due respect, I think we need a change of course and a fresh approach."*
- C. *"Look, we can't go off half-cocked calling people 'evil' and saying they hate us or they hate our freedom and democratic principles. Overblown rhetoric like that is unsophisticated, uninformed and won't do anything for us."*
- D. *"The enemy now is basically evil and fundamentally hates everything we are – the democratic principles for which we stand.... This war is going to go on for a long time. It's a generational war."*

Strangely enough, when the first wall started going up around the Sunni community of Adhamiyah, people objected vociferously, leaving surge types somewhat on the defensive

MATCH THE QUOTE

It took Condi a bare few minutes with the AP editorial board to extend the last six years of mayhem and catastrophe another easy 12-20 years into the future

The answer is a hair-raising **D**.

Now for part 2: If you are one of the country's major newspapers – yes, we're speaking of our hometown rag, the New York Times – what do you label the admiral?

- A.** *An Ideologue*
- B.** *An extremist*
- C.** *A pragmatist*
- D.** *A warmonger*

It's **C**, naturally. (The paper's headline read: "Nominee for Joint Chiefs Is Called a Pragmatist.")

10. And how long will that "long war," which the admiral so likes to talk about, actually take? Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice evidently glanced at her own curious version of a clock the other day, and then addressed this question at a meeting with the Associated Press editorial board. Which of the following did she say?

- A. "And I think that what this President has done is in some ways comparable to beginning to set up the long struggle that we are going to have to resolve, particularly the problem of the growth of extremism in the Middle East, which was clearly there underneath the surface and exploded on September 11th so that we finally knew what the real problem was."*
- B. "Now, will we see the end of all of this? Maybe not. But when you're confronted with a fundamentally changed strategic set of circumstances, you can try to put band-aids on it or you can say we're going to have to deal with the root problems here and it may take a long time and*

it may take successive administrations to succeed."

C. "But we know what we have to put in place so that successive administrations can succeed, and you don't get there by covering the problems or trying to find a temporary solution to them that isn't worth the paper that it's written on."

D. "We're here at the beginning of a big historic transformation, and some of them may still work out on our watch and some of them may not. But now if you – if you – with all due respect, if you try to judge what you should do by today's headlines, you miss the fact that history's judgment is rarely the same as today's headlines."

If you guessed **A, B, C,** and **D**, all said practically in a single breath, you were 100% correct. It took Condi a bare few minutes with the AP editorial board to extend the last six years of mayhem and catastrophe another easy 12-20 years into the future ("successive administrations"). So it turns out that, while Secretary of Defense Gates and General Petraeus are looking at clocks whose second and minute hands are speeding along far too fast for their taste, the new head of the Joint Chiefs and our Secretary of State have timepieces whose minutes pass in weeks, hours in months, and days in years.

11. When discussing American efforts to arm Sunni groups who now claim they are willing to fight al-Qaeda, what did Major General Rick Lynch, commander of the Third Infantry Division,

recently say?

A. “We don’t negotiate with terrorists, but sometimes we renegotiate who we call terrorists.”

B. “This isn’t a black and white place. There are good guys and bad guys and there are groups in between.”

C. “You see... in this war, things get confused out there—power, ideals, the old morality and practical military necessity.”

D. “We’ve had good success in operations like this before. Look at Afghanistan in the 80s. We armed Sunnis to fight the Soviets and we ultimately won that one. Imagine what we can produce by getting behind Sunni fighters in Iraq today!”

If you thought you could imagine an Army general intoning answer C, there’s a reason. The line comes from the fictional General Corman in the film *Apocalypse Now*. The real answer is **B**. One wonders, however, how such thinking fits with the strict dichotomy of good and evil proffered by the likes of Admiral Mullen and Vice President Dick Cheney who, as it happens, is the subject of our bonus challenge.

Bonus Challenge: The ever-stalwart Dick (in the throes of being) Cheney recently got up before the graduating class at West Point and said, in part:

D. “The terrorists know what they want and they will stop at nothing to get it.... Their ultimate goal is to establish a totalitarian empire, a caliphate, with Baghdad as its capital. They view the world as a battlefield and they yearn to hit us again.

And now they have chosen to make Iraq the central front in their war against civilization.... They are surging their capabilities, attacking Iraqi and American forces, and killing innocent civilians. America is fighting this enemy in Iraq because that is where they have gathered. We are there because, after 9/11, we decided to deny terrorists any safe haven.”

Didn’t he mean that, in Iraq, “we decided to deny terrorists any unsafe haven?” Anyway, yes, the answer is **D**. Now, it’s up to you to create your own **A**, **B**, and **C**. Can you top Dick’s “war against civilization”? Can you match him image for rabid image? Give it a shot.

After all, why should administration officials and military spokesmen be the only ones to run wild, guns cocked, in the fields of imagery, spraying everything in sight? Just remember though: When you’re done, close the playground gate, shut down the ballpark, turn off the alarm on your clock, and turn out those lights. If you don’t, I guarantee you, they won’t. **CT**

Tom Engelhardt, who runs the Nation Institute’s Tomdispatch.com, where this quiz was first published, is the co-founder of the American Empire Project and author of Mission Unaccomplished: Tomdispatch Interviews with American Iconoclasts and Dissenters. Nick Turse is the associate editor and research director of Tomdispatch.com. He has written for the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Nation, the Village Voice, and regularly for TomDispatch.

Why should administration officials and military spokesmen be the only ones to run wild, guns cocked, in the fields of imagery, spraying everything in sight?

THE SILENCE OF THE BOMBS

BY NORMAN SOLOMON

"The problem after a war is with the victor," longtime peace activist A. J. Muste observed several decades ago. "He thinks he has just proved that war and violence pay"

Three years have passed since most Americans came to the conclusion that the Iraq war was a "mistake." Reporting the results of a Gallup poll in June 2004, USA Today declared: "It is the first time since Vietnam that a majority of Americans has called a major deployment of U.S. forces a mistake." And public opinion continued to move in an antiwar direction.

But such trends easily coexist with a war effort becoming even more horrific.

In Washington, over the past 25 years, top masters of war have preened themselves in the glow of victory after military triumphs in Grenada, Panama, the 1991 Gulf War, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.

During that time, with the exception of the current war in Iraq, the Pentagon's major aggressive ventures have been cast in a light of virtue rewarded—in sync with the implicit belief that American might makes right.

"The problem after a war is with the victor," longtime peace activist A. J. Muste observed several decades ago.

"He thinks he has just proved that war and violence pay."

The present situation has a different twist along the same lines. The Iraq war drags on, the United States is certainly not the victor—and the U.S. president, a fervent believer in war and violence, still has a lot to prove.

Faith that American might makes right is apt to be especially devout among those who command the world's most powerful military—and have the option of trying to overcome wartime obstacles by unleashing even more lethal violence.

These days, there's a lot of talk about seeking a political solution in Iraq—but the Bush administration and the military leaders who answer to the commander in chief are fundamentally engaged in a very different sort of project. Looking ahead, from the White House, the key goal is to seem to be winding down the U.S. war effort while actually reconfiguring massive violence to make it more effective.

Two sets of figures have paramount importance in mainline U.S. media and

politics – the number of U.S. troops stationed in Iraq and the number of them dying there. Often taking cues from news media and many lawmakers on Capitol Hill, antiwar groups have tended to buy into the formula, emphasizing those numbers and denouncing them as intolerably high.

Meanwhile, the Iraqis killed by Americans don't become much of an issue in the realms of U.S. media and politics. News coverage provides the latest tallies of Iraqis who die from "sectarian violence" and "terrorist attacks," but the reportage rarely discusses how the U.S. occupation has been an ascending catalyst for that carnage. It's even rarer for the coverage to focus on the magnitude of Iraqi deaths that are direct results of American firepower.

In the United States, many advocates of U.S. withdrawal from Iraq have focused on what the war has been doing to Americans. This approach may seem like political pragmatism and tactical wisdom, but in the long run it's likely to play into the hands of White House strategists who will try to regain domestic political ground by reducing American losses while boosting the use of high-tech weaponry against Iraqi people.

Every night, I receive an email bulletin that's called "U.S. Air Force Print News." It's one of countless ways the Pentagon does continual outreach to journalists with messages that encourage favorable coverage of what the military is doing. Those messages are filled with stories about the bravery, compassion and towering stature of – in the

words of retired Gen. Colin Powell a decade ago – "those wonderful men and women who do such a great job."

But journalists receive just a trickle of limited information about the bombing runs undertaken by the U.S. military in Afghanistan and Iraq. The official sources have very little to say about what happens to people at the other end of the bombs. And, overall, U.S. media outlets don't add much information about the human consequences.

In late May, an important challenge to those media patterns appeared on the website TomDispatch.com (and, in shorter form, in *The Nation* magazine). The in-depth article – titled "Did the U.S. Lie about Cluster Bomb Use in Iraq?" – went beyond probing the Pentagon's extensive use of barbaric cluster bombs in Iraq since the spring of 2003. The piece, by journalist Nick Turse, also shined a bright light on fundamental aspects of a U.S. air war that has seldom seen any light of day in big American media outlets.

"Unfortunately, thanks to an utter lack of coverage by the mainstream media, what we don't know about the air war in Iraq so far outweighs what we do know that anything but the most minimal picture of the nature of destruction from the air in that country simply can't be painted," Turse writes.

The article raises a key question: "Does the U.S. military keep the numbers of rockets and cannon rounds fired from its planes and helicopters secret because more Iraqi civilians have died due to their use than any other type of weaponry?"

News coverage provides the latest tallies of Iraqis who die from "sectarian violence" and "terrorist attacks," but the reportage rarely discusses how the U.S. occupation has been an ascending catalyst for that carnage

VIETNAM REDUX

The available evidence is strong that the U.S. air war is escalating – with a surge of resulting casualties among Iraqi civilians

Turse, an associate editor and research director of TomDispatch.com, has written for daily newspapers including the Los Angeles Times and the San Francisco Chronicle.

His article pulls no punches about the press as he assesses huge gaps in media coverage of the Iraq air war funded by U.S. taxpayers.

Sadly, he observes, “media reports on the air war are so sparse, with reporting confined largely to reprinting U.S. military handouts and announcements of air strikes, that much of the air war in Iraq remains unknown – although the very fact of an occupying power regularly conducting air strikes in and near population centers should have raised a question or two.”

The available evidence is strong that the U.S. air war is escalating – with a surge of resulting casualties among Iraqi civilians. Their suffering and their deaths get very little coverage in the U.S. news media. “Since the Bush administration’s invasion, the American air war has been given remarkably short shrift in the media,” Turse writes. And he cites “indications that the air war has taken an especially grievous toll on Iraqi children.”

The combination of deceptive officials in the U.S. government and an evasive U.S. press has been a disaster for the flow of information to the American public. “With the military unwilling to tell the truth – or say anything at all, in most cases – and unable to provide the stability necessary for [non-governmental organizations] to operate, it falls to the mainstream media, even at this late stage of the

conflict, to begin ferreting out substantive information on the air war,” Turse points out. “It seems, however, that until reporters begin bypassing official U.S. military pronouncements and locating Iraqi sources, we will remain largely in the dark with little knowledge of what can only be described as the secret U.S. air war in Iraq.”

As the summer of 2007 gets underway, the demand to “bring the troops home” is necessary but insufficient. The numbers of Americans fighting and dying in Iraq are not a reliable measure of U.S. culpability in the continuing slaughter.

We need only look back to the war in Vietnam to see what can easily happen when a government reacts to public revulsion against war. Between mid-1969 and mid-1972, the U.S. troop levels in Vietnam dropped by about 500,000. At the same time, the U.S. government actually stepped up its bombing of Vietnam – so that three and a half million tons of bombs fell on Vietnam during those three years of “withdrawal.”

We should make sure the next withdrawal doesn’t amount to a reply of history. **CT**

The new documentary film War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death, based on Norman Solomon’s book of the same title, was released directly to DVD in mid-June. For information about the full-length movie, produced by the Media Education Foundation and narrated by Sean Penn, go to: www.WarMadeEasyTheMovie.org

GIULIANI, ALTAR BOYS AND WEASELS

BY MICHAEL I. NIMAN

The American mass media calls him “America’s Mayor.” Critics often label him a fascist. Whether he’s the populist hero who “took charge” on September 11, 2001, or the frightening face of a new American Reich, it appears Rudolph Giuliani will carry George W. Bush’s torch into the 2008 presidential election. I guess this only makes sense, since, like Bush, Giuliani’s failing political career was rescued by the terrorists that attacked New York and Washington, DC on September 11.

When Giuliani emerged from the dust of the World Trade Center, it seems the national media caught a quick case of amnesia, preferring the iconic image of a hero over reality, quickly forgetting Giuliani’s dismal tenure in office and his sorry performance on the morning of September 11.

Before picking up the “hero” moniker, Giuliani was commonly referred to in the city he governed as a “fascist” and a “thug.” These accusations didn’t just come from civil libertarians. Former New York Mayor Ed

Koch likened Giuliani to the former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. According to Koch, Giuliani “uses the levers of power to punish any critic.” Koch went on to explain, “He doesn’t have that right – that’s why the First Amendment is so important.”

Giuliani’s disdain for freedom of speech is best exemplified by the case of Robert Lederman, an artist who specializes in drawing caricatures of Giuliani as a dictator and depicting his policies as transforming New York into a police state. Lederman was arrested 40 times during Giuliani’s reign for displaying his art at political demonstrations and on the streets of New York. Lederman was never convicted of a crime. In a similar fashion, Giuliani ordered paid advertisements for New York magazine removed from public buses because the ads touted the magazine as “possibly the only good thing in New York Rudy hasn’t taken credit for.”

According to the New York Times, the Daily News and the New York Post, then attorney general candidate

When Giuliani emerged from the dust of the World Trade Center, it seems the national media caught a quick case of amnesia, preferring the iconic image of a hero over reality

NOT OUR MAYOR

In 1999, James Savage, the president of the New York City police union, referred to Giuliani's zero tolerance policy as a "blueprint for a police state and tyranny"

Eliot Spitzer said in October 1998, "the current Mayor thinks he's a dictator, and does not have sufficient respect not only for other branches of government, but also for the citizenry and its opportunities to speak out and be heard."

Spitzer's complaints, like Lederman's arrests, stemmed from Giuliani's "zero tolerance" policies, which he argued would improve the quality of life in New York by addressing small crimes such as jaywalking, drinking in public, marijuana possession and panhandling, and non-crimes such as Lederman's persistent expressions of free speech. Under this policy, New Yorkers were handcuffed and dragged off to jail for drinking beer on their front stoops – the New York City equivalent of hanging out on the porch. Marijuana possession arrests increased by well over 4,000 percent. Eventually almost 70,000 people sued the city for police abuses such as strip-searching suspected jaywalkers. In 1999, James Savage, the president of the New York City police union, referred to Giuliani's zero tolerance policy as a "blueprint for a police state and tyranny."

The hunting of altar boys

Giuliani shored up control of the police department by appointing crony Howard Safir as commissioner. Safir then enhanced the department's Street Crimes Unit into what New York journalist Nat Hentoff described as a "rogue" operation that made "Dirty Harry look like Mahatma Gandhi." Fashion-wise, the unit had more resemblance to Guatemala's notorious military death squads, wearing "We

Own the Night" t-shirts, and shirts citing Ernest Hemingway's "There is no hunting like the hunting of man" quote – quite a variation from standard issue uniforms.

This is the police unit that became notorious for shooting African immigrant Amadou Diallo 40 times as he reached for his wallet after being ordered to show identification. When New Yorkers took to the streets to protest the shooting, Giuliani told the press that people were protesting due to "their own personal inadequacies."

Eventually the Giuliani-sanctioned machismo infected other units in the police department. When undercover officers asked a man on the street to sell them marijuana, the man, Patrick Dorismond, took offense to being called a drug-dealer and got into a scuffle with the unidentified officers, who shot him dead. Giuliani issued a knee-jerk defense of the killers, telling the press that Dorismond was "no altar boy." Salon.com pointed out that, in fact, he was an altar boy.

When Safir left, Giuliani appointed Bernard Kerik to take his place. Kerik later plead guilty to accepting gifts and loans from businesses with alleged crime ties while he served as commissioner.

Little weasels

By the time September 11, 2001 rolled around, Giuliani's approval rating, according to a Quinnipiac University poll, hit a Bush-like 37 percent. Hizzoner got downright weird, proposing a Taliban-style "decency panel," operated out of his office, that would have the power to

determine what would be considered “art” in New York City. In 2001 he ordered a city-wide ban on pet ferrets, claiming that there was something “de-ranged” about opponents of the ban, arguing that “excessive concern with little weasels is a sickness.”

Weasels weren’t the only ones to get the boot in Giuliani’s New York. Hizzoner boasted of moving people from welfare to workfare, where thousands of people earned less than two dollars per hour replacing an equivalent number of parks department employees whose positions were downsized. During this period, 13,000 welfare-dependent City University of New York students were forced to leave school and enter the menial workfare force, where less than six percent of participants transition to real employment paying minimum wage or more.

Hero of the day?

Mega real estate developer Donald Trump described Giuliani as “maybe the best [mayor] ever.” Ralph Nader called him “the oligarch’s mayor.” Giuliani took credit for a high-end real estate boom while presiding over double-digit rises in homelessness, cutting public spending on affordable housing by nearly half and housing for the homeless by nearly three quarters.

Today, America’s Mayor lives and breathes a 9/11 mantra. Forget the details of his tenure in Gracie Mansion. He’s an iconic American hero – the leader we needed when George W. Bush was AWOL on September 11.

But was Giuliani really the hero of the day?

On September 11 New York was left without an emergency command center because Giuliani, against the advice of the police and fire departments, decided to locate the center in the third World Trade Center building, above fuel tanks containing tens of thousands of gallons of fuel – this despite a 1993 terrorist attempt to topple the towers. It was this decision that put him on the street on September 11 instead of inside a command center coordinating operations. Ironically, this decision also put him in front of hundreds of press cameras, sparking his transformation into an iconic, dust-covered hero.

While our hero was wandering the streets, however, there was no communication between the police department, whose helicopter pilots determined that the towers were in danger of collapsing, and the fire department, whose real heroes were rushing into the towers. And there was no communication between the police officers who identified an open stairway for escape from above the fire and the 911 operators who were telling soon-to-be-dead office workers to stay put and wait for firefighters.

Whatever possibility existed for communication between the police and fire departments, whose radios operate on different frequencies, evaporated when Giuliani visited a makeshift fire/police command center that formed in his absence and ordered to police brass to leave and accompany him uptown. This effectively put the fire department and police department leadership in different places with no communication between them.

While our hero was wandering the streets, however, there was no communication between the police department, whose helicopter pilots determined that the towers were in danger of collapsing, and the fire department, whose real heroes were rushing into the towers

NOT OUR MAYOR

Gorman went a step further, joining hordes of New Yorkers who called the mayor a “fascist” – which brings us back to the fascist issue that dogged Giuliani throughout his tenure as mayor

A month after the September 11 attacks, firefighters took to the streets to protest against Giuliani’s decision to limit the number of uniformed firefighters and police officers sifting through the rubble for remains. They accused the administration of speeding up the cleanup at the cost of possibly discarding the remains of victims.

Giuliani, in signature style, ordered Peter Gorman, head of the Uniformed Fire Officers Association, and Kevin Gallagher, head of the Uniformed Firefighters Association, to be arrested at the protest site.

A spokesperson for Gallagher told the media that, “The mayor fails to realize that New York City is not a dictatorship.” Gorman went a step further, joining hordes of New Yorkers who called the mayor a “fascist” – which brings us back to the fascist issue that dogged Giuliani throughout his tenure as mayor.

Giuliani often answers the charge by accusing his detractors of ethnic bias –

as if “fascist” were somehow an ethnic slur against Italian Americans.

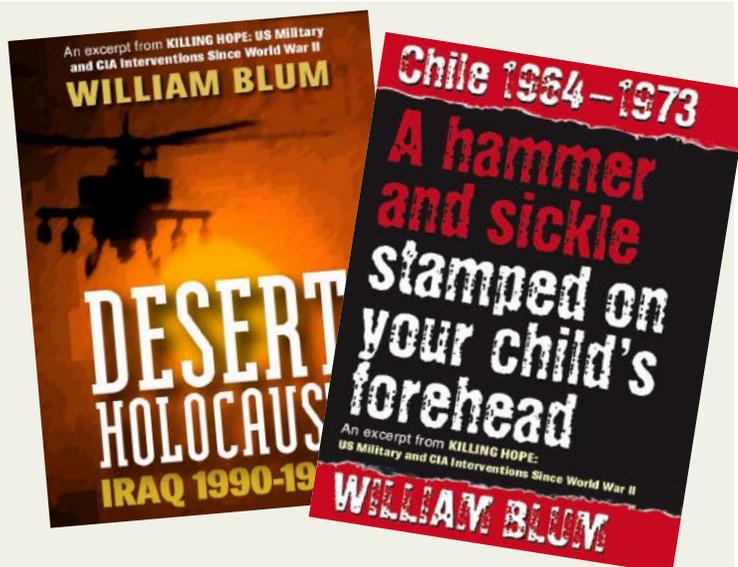
His response, however, stinks of anti-Italian-American ethnic bias, ignoring the role New York’s Italian-American community has played in democratic politics – giving the city, for example, its most revered mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia. The fascist charges don’t stem from Giuliani’s ethnicity, they stem from his actions and statements. Giuliani, in his own words, explains that, “freedom is not a concept in which people can do anything they want, be anything they can be. Freedom,” he explains, “is about authority. Freedom is about the willingness of every single human being to cede to lawful authority a great deal of discretion about what you do.”

And you thought George W. Bush was dangerous. **CT**

Dr. Michael I. Niman is a regular contributor to ColdType. His essays are archived at www.mediastudy.com

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THE SADDAM TRIAL WE NEVER SAW

BY BARRY LANDO

As expected, on June 24th in Baghdad, the Iraqi Special Tribunal sentenced Ali Hassan al-Majid, alias Chemical Ali, to death, along with two other defendants, for his role in the killing of tens of thousands of Kurds in the late 1980's

All the key players in the media were there to capture the dramatic courtroom scene. What none of the reporters mentioned however was that when Saddam and Chemical Ali and the rest of Saddam killers were doing their worst, the U.S. governments of Ronald Reagan and later George Bush Senior were their de facto allies, providing them with vital satellite intelligence, weapons and financing, while shielding them from U.N. investigations or efforts by the U.S. Congress to impose trade sanctions for their depredations.

I admit to being somewhat obsessed by the subject, but perhaps someone can explain how it is that none of the accounts of the June 24th session that I've read mention how close were the ties of the U.S. and Saddam – and how carefully the U.S. and its Iraqi allies

have manipulated the Tribunal from the beginning so that the complicity of the U.S. and other Western countries with Saddam and his crimes are never discussed?

Surely it might be worth a side bar or analysis piece from the likes of the New York Times or the Washington Post or the LA Times or Time or Newsweek or the Boston Globe or CNN or ABC or CBS. Put things in context for your audience who might be led to think that Saddam and Chemical Ali were operating in an international vacuum.

I find it difficult to believe that none of the many excellent reporters who have covered the Tribunal have never suggested the subject to their editors. Nor that none of those editors ever requested such a piece from their vast stable of reporters. But I guess they didn't.

So it remains my obsession.

The tribunal was established to prosecute those guilty of crimes against humanity during Saddam's reign. Much as the Nuremberg Tribunal did with the Nazis, It was also supposedly meant to educate Iraqis and the world

What none of the reporters mentioned however was that when Saddam and Chemical Ali and the rest of Saddam killers were doing their worst, the U.S. governments of Ronald Reagan and later George Bush Senior were their de facto allies

To make the rules of the game perfectly clear, one of the tribunal's regulations, constantly overlooked by the media, is that only Iraqi citizens and residents can be charged with crimes before that court

about Saddam and his barbarous regime and, at the same time, to bring a kind of closure to that nightmarish epoch. That at least was the fiction. The fact is that many of those complicit in Saddam's crimes – some of the world's most prominent leaders and businessmen, past and present – are missing from the dock. The full story of Saddam's crimes will never be told.

Which is just as planned. From the start, the tribunal was established, financed and advised by the United States, the same power that once helped arm Saddam, encouraged him and stymied the attempts of others to rein him in.

Even most of the forensic investigations – the excavation of mass graves and the examination of mountains of documents – were carried out under the supervision of U.S. investigators.

To make the rules of the game perfectly clear, one of the tribunal's regulations, constantly overlooked by the media, is that only Iraqi citizens and residents can be charged with crimes before that court.

It is thus understandable that there has been no mention in the Baghdad courtroom of foreign complicity with Saddam's crimes, such as the genocide of the Kurds. What is surprising, though, is how thoroughly the American media have played along with that charade.

Take the dramatic account by John Burns in *The New York Times* of an event this past January when prosecutors presented damning recorded evidence of Saddam and his officials cold-bloodedly discussing the use of chemi-

cal weapons against the Kurds.

One of the voices was identified by prosecutors as that of Saddam's cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, who came to be known as Chemical Ali, scornfully dismissing concern that foreign powers might react to Saddam's using chemical weapons against the Kurds.

"I will strike them [the Kurds] with chemical weapons and kill them all," he was heard saying. "Who is going to say anything? The international community? A curse on the international community!"

Some reporter might have pointed out that Chemical Ali had good reason for such assurances: Beginning in 1983 – five years before the attacks on the Kurds – the U.S. had wilfully ignored the fact that Iraqis were using chemical weapons against the Iranians. But more than just ignore the fact, for years the administration continued to block all attempts by the United Nations and later the U.S. Congress to condemn Saddam or impose sanctions against Iraq.

Indeed, American satellite intelligence was used by the Iraqis to target Iranian troops. The U.S. continued to furnish that intelligence in 1988, even after it realized Saddam was also using chemicals against his own Kurds.

Refused to meet Kurds

American officials also refused to meet with Kurdish leaders who had evidence of the atrocities. Saddam, after all, was America's de facto ally at the time in the war against Khomeini's Iran. And even after the end of that war, until just weeks prior to Saddam's invasion of

Kuwait, George H.W. Bush and James Baker were still intent on wooing the tyrant with trade and credits. They saw Iraq as a major market for U.S. exports, not to mention as a prize for American oil companies. Both West and East, of course, had supplied Saddam with billions of dollars worth of weapons – of all kinds.

Indeed, while the Al Anfal trial was going on in Baghdad, Dutch prosecutors in The Hague presented a document from Saddam Hussein's secret service praising a Dutch businessman, Frans van Anraat, for "rendering outstanding services" by selling Iraq "banned and rare chemicals" during the Iraq-Iran war. Van Anraat was lauded by the Iraqis for daring to "expose himself to extremely dangerous consequences" by selling the chemicals; he also did so "at a reasonable price compared to other offers."

No mention of such foreign complicity during the al Anfal trial in Baghdad, however. Another much more illustrious westerner, George Bush Senior, might have been called before the tribunal in relation to what was probably the worst of Saddam's crimes, the slaughter of tens of thousands of Shiites following the abortive uprising of 1991. The tribunal is due to consider those charges later this summer.

The Shiites were answering the repeated calls by the first President Bush for a popular revolt. Such a call was re-broadcast in Iraq by clandestine CIA radio stations and printed in millions of leaflets dropped by the U.S. Air Force across the country. Problem was, the Iraqis didn't realize until it was too late

that Bush and Baker, his pragmatic secretary of state, didn't really mean it.

When it looked as if the insurgents might actually succeed, the American president turned his back. The White House and its allies wanted Saddam replaced not by a popular revolt which they couldn't control but by a military leader more amenable to U.S. interests.

So, as the United States permitted Saddam's attack helicopters to devastate the rebels, American troops just a few kilometers away from the slaughter were ordered to give no aid to those under attack. Instead they destroyed huge stocks of captured weapons rather than let them fall into rebel hands. According to some rebels in Iraq, American troops prevented them from marching on Baghdad.

Truth commission?

Maybe I've missed something, but to date I've seen no such background given in U.S. media reports about the trial.

But what if, instead of the special tribunal – or along with it – Iraq had established a "truth commission," such as South Africa did after the defeat of apartheid? Imagine also the unimaginable: that the Iraqi government had kept Saddam alive long enough to testify about past relations with the rest of the world.

How enlightening it would have been to hear the former tyrant recount his relief when he realized in 1991 that President Bush père was actually going to help him stay in power.

Saddam might have also explained to what degree the mixed messages

Another much more illustrious westerner, George Bush Senior, might have been called before the tribunal in relation to what was probably the worst of Saddam's crimes, the slaughter of tens of thousands of Shiites following the abortive uprising of 1991

The Iraqis might have heard from Saddam and others about the CIA's participation in the coup of 1963 that first brought the Baath Party to power, the CIA providing it with lists of hundreds of suspected communists and leftists to be picked up, tortured and disposed of

from the senior Bush and the State Department were responsible for his concluding there would be no adverse reaction from Washington when he invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Or Saddam might have shed some light on the invasion of Iran. According to a memo written by Alexander Haig, Ronald Reagan's secretary of state, it was the Carter White House in 1980 which encouraged Iraq – via the Saudis – to invade Iran in the first place. Because Jimmy Carter has always denied that charge, it would have been interesting to hear Saddam expound on the issue.

Can you imagine the headlines generated by Saddam and his officials describing the dealings behind the billions of dollars of arms they imported from across the globe as leaders from East and West battled for a share of the bonanza.

How the German governments – east and west – for instance, closed their eyes as scores of German industries also helped Saddam build his chemical arsenal. Saddam might have had a few pithy remarks about the British under Margaret Thatcher – and her son Mark – who were equally eager to cash in on the Iraqi arms gusher.

It would have been instructive to hear Saddam detail his dealings with the French and Jacques Chirac, who sold the dictator a nuclear reactor in the 1970s, though it was clear Saddam was seeking weapons of mass destruction.

This search for historical truth could have gone back to the beginnings – to the charge that the CIA was involved in

organizing the action that first brought Saddam notoriety: his participation in the botched 1959 assassination attempt against Iraqi President Abd al-Karim Qasim, who had proved too nationalistic and close to the Soviets for American and British Cold War tastes.

Or the Iraqis might have heard from Saddam and others about the CIA's participation in the coup of 1963 that first brought the Baath Party to power, the CIA providing it with lists of hundreds of suspected communists and leftists to be picked up, tortured and disposed of. Saddam back then was one of the young Baath torturers.

Chilling evidence

But let's return from such delusional speculation to the current status of the Special Iraqi Tribunal. Deep in the bunkered, barricaded confines of the Green Zone, the last redoubt of the American occupiers and Iraqi would-be rulers, for months prosecutors and defense attorneys argue over chilling evidence of Saddam's genocidal killings while the judges and defendants sit and listen.

They hear of entire families gassed, shot in the neck or the back and left for dead or buried alive.

It's a Kafkaesque play within a play. For just outside the Green Zone, across Baghdad and throughout many other parts of Iraq, there is a reign of terror that in its randomness and horror far surpasses the dread of Saddam's era.

It's a play that – with Saddam no longer playing the starring role – has been performed to ever smaller audiences.

Certainly millions of Iraqis – particularly the Kurds – were glued to their television sets to watch the verdict handed down against Chemical Ali and his confederates. But there was no print media present for most of the recent sessions. Foreign media were even less interested. Almost all the NGOs that once followed every turn of the proceedings to ensure that they bore at least a passing resemblance to accepted legal practices are no longer there. At times, there are hardly any spectators at all.

These trials were supposed to provide dramatic justification for the Bush-Blair invasion of Iraq. But with the mayhem unleashed in the country today, no one buys that script any longer. Instead the tribunal has become an increasingly irrelevant sideshow, its procedures denounced by the same human rights groups that once denounced Saddam.

That being the case, it's very unlikely

the tribunal will run its full course. The U.S. government is said to be cutting back on financial, material and staff support.

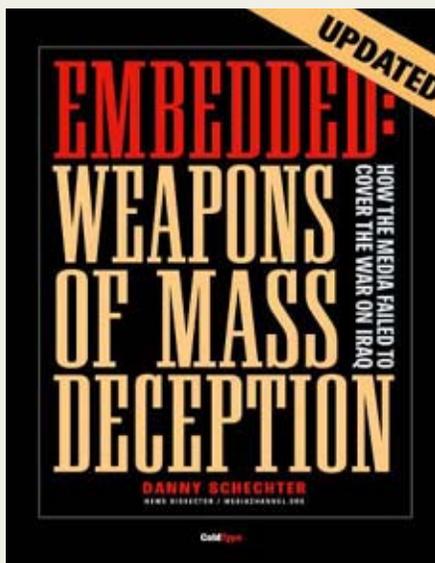
There's not much point in playing to an empty house. **CT**

Barry Lando is the author of Web Of Deceit: The History of Western Complicity in Iraq, from Churchill to Kennedy to George W. Bush. An earlier version of this essay appeared at www.truthdig.com.

Note: Five days after Lando's original piece ran in Truthdig, the Los Angeles Times ran an oped piece by Peter Galbraith which described some of the attempts by the Reagan and then the Bush Sr. administrations to cover up Saddam's murderous attacks against the Kurds. The link is:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-oe-galbraith28jun28,1,5009861.story?coll=la-news-comment>

The tribunal has become an increasingly irrelevant sideshow, its procedures denounced by the same human rights groups that once denounced Saddam



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FROM DEMOCRACY TO OPPRESSION

BY CHRIS HEDGES

Israel's West Bank separation barrier, built ostensibly to keep out Palestinian bombers, has also been used to swallow huge tracts of the West Bank into Israel

Israel captured and occupied the Gaza Strip and the West Bank 40 years ago in June 1967. The victory was celebrated as a great triumph, at once tripling the size of the land under Israeli control, including East Jerusalem. It was, however, a Pyrrhic victory.

As the occupation stretched over the decades, it transformed and deformed Israeli society. It led Israel to abandon the norms and practices of a democratic society until, in the name of national security, it began to routinely accept the brutal violence of occupation and open discrimination and abuse of Palestinians, including the torture of prisoners and collective reprisals for Palestinian attacks. Palestinian neighborhoods, olive groves and villages were, in the name of national security, bulldozed into the ground.

Israel's image has shifted from that of a heroic, open society set amid a sea of despotic regimes to that of an international pariah. Israel's West Bank separation barrier, built ostensibly to keep out Palestinian bombers, has also been

used to swallow huge tracts of the West Bank into Israel. Palestinian towns are ringed by Israeli checkpoints. Major roads in the West Bank are reserved for Israeli settlers.

The U.N. estimates that about half the West Bank is now off-limits to Palestinians. And every week there are new reports of Palestinian produce that is held up until it rots, pregnant women giving birth in cars because they cannot get to hospitals, and even senseless and avoidable deaths, such as one young woman who died recently when she couldn't get through a checkpoint to her kidney dialysis treatment.

"We are raising commanders who are policemen," former Israeli General Amiram Levine told the newspaper Maariv. "We ask them to excel at the checkpoint. What does it mean to excel at the checkpoint? It means being enough of a bastard to delay a pregnant woman from getting to the hospital."

The occupation was benign at the beginning. Israelis crossed into Palestinian territory to buy cheap vegeta-

bles, eat at local restaurants, spend the weekend in the desert oasis of Jericho and get their cars fixed. The Palestinians were a pool of cheap labor and by the mid-1980s, 40 percent of the Palestinian workforce was employed in Israel.

The Palestinians flowed over the border to the shops and beaches of Tel Aviv. But the second-class status of Palestinians, growing repression by Israeli authorities in the West Bank and Gaza and festering poverty saw Palestinians, most of them too young to remember the moment of occupation, rise up in December 1987 to launch six years of street protests. The uprising eventually led to a peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization led by Yasir Arafat. Arafat, who had spent most of his life in exile, returned in triumph to Gaza.

Moment of hope

The Oslo Accords that followed momentarily heralded a new era, a moment of hope. I was in Gaza when they were signed. The Gaza Strip was awash in a giddy optimism. Palestinian businessmen who had made their fortunes abroad returned to help build the new Palestinian state. The radical Islamists seemed to shrink away. Palestinian women threw off their head scarves and beauty salons sprouted on city streets.

There was a brief and shining sense that life could be normal, free from strife and violence, that finally Palestinians had a future. But it all swiftly turned sour. The 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin,

coupled with mounting draconian restrictions on Palestinians to prevent them from entering Israel and keep them in submission, led to another uprising in 2000. This one, which I also covered for The New York Times, was far more violent.

This latest uprising has led to the deaths of more than 4,300 Palestinians and 1,100 Israelis. It ushered in an Israeli policy that saw Jewish settlers relocated from Gaza, which was then sealed off like a vast prison. Israel also began to build a security barrier – at a cost of about \$1 million per mile – in the West Bank. When it is done, the barrier is expected to incorporate 40 percent of Palestinian land into the Israeli state.

Israeli air strikes have, over the past year, decimated the infrastructure in Gaza, destroying bridges, power stations and civilian administration buildings. The breakdown in law and order, coupled with the growing desperation in Gaza, has triggered an internecine conflict between Hamas and Fatah. There are some 200 Palestinians who have died in clashes and street fighting between the two factions during the past year – more than one-third of those killed by Israel during the same period.

The Israeli abuses have been well documented, not only by international human rights organizations, but Israeli human rights groups such as B'Tselem. On June 4, 2007, Amnesty International released a new 45-page report called “Enduring Occupation: Palestinians Under Siege in the West Bank,” which again illustrates the devastating impact

There was a brief and shining sense that life could be normal, free from strife and violence, that finally Palestinians had a future. But it all swiftly turned sour

6 DAYS AND 40 YEARS

Of Gaza's 1.4 million residents, a staggering 1.1 million now depend on outside food assistance. The World Food Program has identified Gaza as one of the world's hunger global hot spots

of four decades of Israeli military occupation.

The report documents the relentless expansion of unlawful settlements on occupied land. It details the ways Israel has seized or denied crucial resources, such as water, to Palestinians under occupation. It documents a plethora of measures that confine Palestinians to fragmented enclaves and hinder their access to work, health and education facilities. These measures include the 700-kilometer barrier or wall, more than 500 checkpoints and blockades, and a complicated system of permits to heavily restrict movement.

“Palestinians living in the West Bank are blocked at every turn. This is not simply an inconvenience – it can be a matter of life or death. It is unacceptable that women in labor, sick children, or victims of accidents on their way to hospital should be forced to take long detours and face delays which can cost them their lives,” said Malcolm Smart, director of Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Program.

“International action is urgently needed to address the widespread human rights abuses being committed under the occupation, and which are fueling resentment and despair among a predominantly young and increasingly radicalized Palestinian population,” said Smart. “For 40 years, the international community has failed to adequately address the Israeli-Palestinian problem; it cannot, must not, wait another 40 years to do so.”

Of Gaza’s 1.4 million residents, a staggering 1.1 million now depend on outside food assistance. The World

Food Program has identified Gaza as one of the world’s hunger global hot spots. The WFP is a principal food aid provider to Palestinians, providing assistance to 640,000 Palestinians, more than a third of them in Gaza.

The desperation – with young men unable to find work, travel outside the Gaza Strip or West Bank and forced to sleep 10 to a room in concrete hovels without running water – has empowered the Islamic radicals. The desperation has led the Palestinian population, once one of the most secular in the Middle East, to turn to radical fundamentalism. The more pressure and violence Israel employs, the more these radicals are empowered.

Captive of far right

The Israeli lobby in the United States is captive to the far right of Israeli politics. It exerts influence not on behalf of the Jewish state but an ideological strain within Israel that believes it can crush Palestinian aspirations through force.

The self-defeating policies of the Bush administration are mirrored in the self-defeating policies championed by the hard-right administration of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem. Israel flouts international law and dismisses Security Council resolutions to respect the integrity of Palestinian territory. It has instead trapped Palestinians in squalid, barricaded ghettos where they barely survive.

It is not in Israel’s interest – or our own – to continue to fuel increased Palestinian strife and rising militancy. Economic sanctions against Israel are

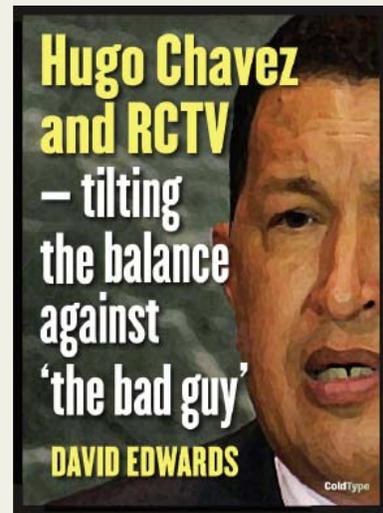
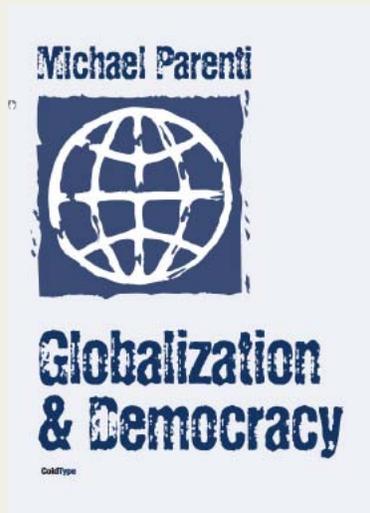
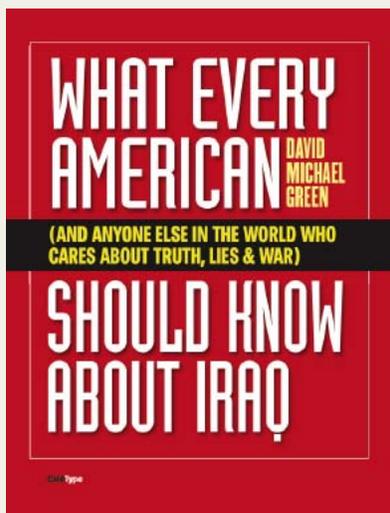
our last hope. These were the tools that toppled the apartheid regime in South Africa. And it was, after all, the sanctions imposed by the first President Bush – he suspended \$10 billion of loan guarantees for resettling Russian immigrants in Israel – that prodded right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to attend peace talks in Madrid. A trade embargo – even if imposed only by European states – would be a start. It is outside pressure that can alone halt the inexorable slide into a

conflict that could become regional. And a new regional conflict with Israel could spell the end of the Zionist experiment in the Middle East. It may be quixotic, perhaps even impossible, but it is the last measure left to save Israel from itself. **CT**

A new regional conflict with Israel could spell the end of the Zionist experiment in the Middle East

Chris Hedges is a veteran journalist and former Mideast bureau chief for The New York Times. His most recent book is American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War On America.

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40 BAD YEARS FOR ISRAEL

BY URI AVNERY

The occupation poisons the national memory. It soils not only the present, but also the past, not only in the eyes of the world, but also in our own eye

*Rest has come to the tired
Repose to the toiler
A pale night covers
The fields of the Jezreel valley
Dew below and moon above
From Kibbutz Bet-Alfa
to Moshav Nahalal...*

This is what we sang when we were young. Now it is a TV nostalgia show, youngsters of the 50s singing pioneer songs.

The thoughts wander. Who were the pioneers, the first to sing these songs?

They came from rich homes in St. Petersburg, from some shtetl in Galicia, sons and daughters of university professors in Germany. They could have sailed to America, like most migrants at that time, but they were attracted to a remote eastern country, to a great national adventure. They lived in abject poverty, doing hard labor in the merciless sun that they were not accustomed to, and dreamed about a perfect human society.

They were real idealists. It did not occur to them that they were hurting

human beings of another people. The Arabs were to them a part of the romantic landscape. They innocently believed they were bringing blessings and progress to all inhabitants of the country. As seen from today, four or five generations later, they look quite different. Their innocence is forgotten. It looks to many like rank hypocrisy, a cover for robbery and oppression.

That is one of the results of 40 years of occupation. The current settlers claim to be the successors of those pioneers of the 20s and 30s. They say that they are today's pioneers. These violent, thieving thugs really expect us to view the pioneers of old as their spiritual forebears.

When we add up all the damage that the occupation has done to us – to us, too, and not only to the direct victims, the inhabitants of the occupied territories – let's not forget this. The occupation poisons the national memory. It soils not only the present, but also the past, not only in the eyes of the world, but also in our own eyes.

It is enough to see what the occupa-

tion has done to the Jewish religion.

In my childhood I was taught at home that Judaism was a humane religion, a “light unto the Gentiles.” Judaism means to loathe violence, to value the spiritual above the powerful, to turn an enemy into a friend. A Jew is allowed to defend himself – “If somebody comes to kill you, kill him first.” as the Talmudic injunction goes – but not as a lover of violence and the intoxication of power.

What has remained of that?

Concerned friends recently e-mailed me some hair-raising quotes from a statement by Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, former Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel and the spiritual leader of the settlers and the entire religious Zionist camp. In a letter to the Prime Minister, the rabbi decreed that it is impermissible to have compassion with the civilian population of Gaza if that imperils Israeli soldiers. His son, Shmuel, interpreted this decree on behalf of his father: if the killing of 100 Arabs is not sufficient to stop the launching of Qassam rockets at Israel, then 1,000 must be killed. And if that is not sufficient, then 10,000, and 100,000 and even a million. All this to stop the Qassams, which in all the years have not succeeded in killing a dozen Jews.

What is the connection between this “religious” view and the God who (in Genesis 18) promised not to destroy Sodom if ten righteous people could be found there?

What is the difference between this moral perception and that of the Nazis who executed ten hostages for every German soldier killed by the resist-

ance?

The rabbi’s decree did not arouse any reaction. There was no outcry, neither from his flock nor from the general public. The number of rabbis who publicly support such methods has risen to the hundreds. Most of them come from the settlements. This is a “religious” outlook that grew up in the poisoned atmosphere of the occupation, a religion of occupation. It shames the Jewish religion, present and past.

No wonder that a person with a strong religious conscience, Avraham Burg, former Speaker of the Knesset and Head of the Jewish Agency, recently renounced Zionism and demanded to abolish the definition of Israel as a Jewish State.

It is no longer anything new to point out that the occupation is destroying the Israeli army.

An army cannot fulfill its mission to defend the state against potential enemies when it has been engaged for decades as a colonial police force. One can give attractive names to a death-squad – Team Mango or Unit Peach – but it remains what it is: an instrument of brutal killing and oppression.

An officer who today plans the Mafia-style killing of a “senior militant” by an undercover action in the Kasbah of Nablus, will not be able tomorrow to lead a tank battalion against a sophisticated enemy. An army that shoots stone-throwers, chases children in the alleys of Balata refugee camp or drops a one-ton bomb on a residential building cannot turn overnight into an efficient force on a modern battlefield in a war of last resort.

An army cannot fulfill its mission to defend the state against potential enemies when it has been engaged for decades as a colonial police force

6 DAYS AND 40 YEARS

The judges have closed their eyes to their own doings. While believing that they are a pillar of liberalism and democracy, they have allowed extra-judicial executions. They have closed their eyes while torture has become routine

No need to read this in the Winograd committee's report. It is enough to compare the commanders of 1967 – people like Yitzhak Rabin, Israel Tal, Ezer Weitzman, Dado Elazar and Matti Peled – with the corresponding figures of today. After 40 years of doing a contemptible job against a defenseless people, the army no longer attracts young people distinguished by original thinking and high motivation, by daring and resourcefulness. It attracts the mediocre of the mediocre.

In the Six-day War we had a small, sophisticated army that defended the state from within the Green Line, once described by Abba Eban as the “Auschwitz borders”. This army needed hardly six days to overcome four opposing armies. Since then, after the territory was enlarged and ideal “security borders” were achieved, the army has become much bigger and its budget many times more bloated. The results could be seen in the Second Lebanon War.

From a military point of view, the occupation is a grave threat to the security of the state. That leaves the Supreme Court. Opinion polls have shown that the public derides the Knesset and scorns the government, but respects the Supreme Court as a bastion of democracy and a source of pride.

Lately, it is becoming apparent that there was no solid basis for this. A moment after Chief Justice Aharon Barak retired from the Court, the entire judicial system started sinking into a morass of intrigues, mutual accusations and even slander. Not only in any-

mous internet blogs, but also in the statements of the new Minister of Justice, the appointee of a Prime Minister dogged by personal corruption scandals.

How has this happened?

For many years now, the court has lived in a world of illusion. The judges have closed their eyes to their own doings. While believing that they are a pillar of liberalism and democracy, they have allowed extra-judicial executions. They have closed their eyes while torture has become routine. They have created mountains of sophistry arguing that the monstrous Wall is essential to security, trying to obscure the obvious fact that its main aim is the grabbing of land for the settlements.

When the International Court published its simple, clear and indisputable opinion that the Wall violates international law and several conventions which have been signed by Israel, too, our Supreme Court just disregarded it.

A court that lies to itself in one sector cannot maintain its integrity in another. The “bastion of democracy” has been undermined, and may collapse entirely.

In the meantime, the book of laws is besmirched with racist legislation – from the law that prevents Israeli citizens from living in Israel with Palestinian spouses, to the bill which this month received primary approval in the Knesset, and which allows 80 members of the Knesset to expel a Knesset member for voicing, both in the Knesset or outside, criticism of cabinet ministers or senior army commanders.

It cannot be denied: 40 years of occupation have changed the State of Israel beyond recognition.

That is obvious in all spheres of life. All of them have been contaminated.

18-year old youngsters, most of who have been brought up by decent parents as moral human beings, are drafted into the army, enter the brutal subculture of their units and receive an indoctrination that justifies every act of brutality against Arabs. Only a few rare individuals are able to withstand the pressure. After three years, the majority leave the army as tough men with blunted sensibilities. The brutality in our streets, the routine killings around the discotheques, the proliferation of rape and violence within the family – all these have undoubtedly been influenced by the day-to-day reality of the occupation. After all, it's the same people who are doing it.

A policeman who is sent to Hebron and the Hawara checkpoint, who treats the inhabitants there as inferior creatures, who acts sadistically or condones the sadism of his comrades – will he turn into a different person when he returns the next day to Tel Aviv, Haifa or Shefa-Amr? Will he wake up the next morning, miraculously, as a devoted servant of his fellow-citizens in a democratic society?

For years now, the security services, the police and the army have been lying about events in the occupied territories. Lying has become routine. Few journalists in the world now accept these statements unquestioningly. And when lying becomes the norm in one sector, the mendacity doesn't stop

there. The liars of the army, the police and the other services have gotten used to lying about other matters, too.

In the "territories." corruption has a ball. Military government officers take off their uniforms and get involved in shady businesses. Capitalist barons also profit from connections with them. Of course, this is not the only source of the corruption that has become a bane of the state, but it is surely a contributing factor.

The occupation causes rot, which then penetrates all the pores of the national organism. After 40 years, there is little similarity between the State of Israel as it is today and the state that the founders saw in their mind's eye: a model of social justice, equality and peace. The founders dreamed about a modern, enlightened, secular, liberal, socially progressive society with a flourishing economy benefiting all. Reality, as we known, has turned out very, very different.

True, the occupation cannot be blamed for everything. Before 1967, too, the young state was far from perfect. But the public felt then that this was a temporary situation. Things could be corrected and improved. When the Israeli republic turned into a nascent Israeli empire, the dramatic deterioration started.

At the end of the Six-Day War, the entire world saluted us. Little, brave David had won against Goliath. Now it is we who are seen as a heartless, brutal Goliath.

The boycott against Israel announced by several foreign organizations must turn on a red light. In the

A policeman who is sent to Hebron and the Hawara checkpoint, who treats the inhabitants there as inferior creatures, who acts sadistically or condones the sadism of his comrades – will he turn into a different person when he returns the next day to Tel Aviv, Haifa or Shefa-Amr?

40-YEAR OCCUPATION

Israel arouses different expectations than the Congo or Sudan. But for years now, hundreds of millions of people see it almost daily in the form of occupation soldiers, armed to the teeth, abusing a helpless population

Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that every nation must behave with “a decent respect for the opinion of mankind.” That was not only a matter of ethics but also of practical common sense. For us to maintain an occupation that violates international law is spitting in the eye of enlightened humanity.

Israel arouses different expectations than the Congo or Sudan. But for years now, hundreds of millions of people see it almost daily in the form of occupation soldiers, armed to the teeth, abusing a helpless population. The accumulating effect is becoming clear now.

One can treat the opinion of mankind with disdain, in the spirit of Stalin’s question “How many divisions does the Pope have?” But that is stupid. International opinion can express itself in a thousand different ways. It influences the policy of governments and civil society. The attempts at boycott are only an early symptom.

But beyond all the bad things the occupation has brought upon Israel, inside and outside, there is something

that concerns each of us. Every human being wants to be proud of his country. The occupation deprives us of this.

On the 40th anniversary of the occupation of East Jerusalem, a foreign TV station wanted to interview me in the Muslim quarter of the Old City. We walked in the Via Dolorosa, the Way of the Cross. The street was almost empty. The owners of the shops offering antiques, precious carpets and souvenirs stood in their doorways, radiating despair, and tried to lure us in.

From time to time, small groups of tourists went past. Each group was accompanied by four security guards in white overalls, two in front and two behind. Every one of them was holding in his hand a loaded pistol, ready to open fire within a split second. That’s how they walked in the street.

That is the reality of “Jerusalem Reunited and Indivisible, the Capital of Israel for All Eternity,” as the official slogan goes, 40 years after its “liberation”.

CT

Uri Avnery is an Irgun veteran turned Israeli peace activist

As in all her previous books, Linda McQuaig strips away the comforting illusions peddled by those in power. With her trademark combination of research, analysis, irreverence and passion, McQuaig shows how the elite has pushed us down a path with far-reaching consequences for us as a nation, and for our ability to find our own way in the world.

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CANADA AND THE U.S. EMPIRE

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DOUBLEDAY
CANADA

A CATCH-22 NUCLEAR WORLD

BY DILIP HIRO

For countries – small, middling, or great – acquiring nuclear weapons is all about the most basic requirement: the survival of the regime or nation. Joining the “nuclear club” has proved an effective strategy for survival. The possession of city-busting, potentially planet-ending weaponry threatens to bring about a MAD – the Cold War acronym for “Mutually Assured Destruction” – world. While the “madness” of this strategy is apparent, a rarely mentioned aspect of today’s geopolitics is that acquiring nuclear arms has proven a logical step for a regime to take when its survival is at stake.

The United States and the Soviet Union, the superpowers of the Cold War, stacked up nuclear weapons by the thousands as “deterrents,” well aware that the use of even a tiny fraction of them would annihilate the planet many times over. The doctrine worked, maintaining a precarious peace until the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

When Communist China acquired

an atom bomb in 1964, it joined the four permanent members of the United Nations Security Council with veto power – the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France – which possessed nuclear arms, thus gaining an entry to the “nuclear club.”

The club’s monopoly was broken by a minor power, Israel, in 1967 – stealthily, because its leaders decided not to test the bomb they had built. Even so, the Central Intelligence Agency got wind of it. What did then-President Lyndon Johnson’s administration do about it? Nothing.

And what about the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN watchdog agency charged with administering the 1968 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)? It was empowered to act, but only in cases where a UN member had signed on to the Treaty. Israel did not.

In June 1981, when the UN Security Council’s resolution 487 directed Israel to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards anyway, Israel simply ignored it. President Ronald Reagan’s

The club’s monopoly was broken by a minor power, Israel, in 1967 – stealthily, because its leaders decided not to test the bomb they had built. Even so, the Central Intelligence Agency got wind of it

THE SURVIVAL GAME

The episode, frightening as it was, reassured Pakistani officials that their country was now secure from being overpowered by India

White House maintained a thunderous silence on the matter.

Compare that to the Bush administration's present stance in the case of Iran. Unlike Israel, Tehran initialed the Non-Proliferation Treaty early on – and that treaty allows a signatory non-nuclear power to enrich uranium for civilian purposes. By not informing the IAEA when it started to do so in 2002, however, Tehran failed to meet its treaty obligations. That “original sin,” combined with the Bush administration's strong animus toward a hostile regional power, has in its trail brought UN sanctions against Tehran, with Washington acting as the prime mover.

The lure of deterrence

In 1998, four years before Iran's push for nuclear power, India officially detonated an atomic bomb and, soon after, its arch rival Pakistan followed suit. Like Israel, neither of them had signed on to the NPT. India exploded a “nuclear device” in 1974, claiming it was for “peaceful purposes.” U.S. sanctions followed but did not impede Delhi's progress in this field. India had embarked on this path after acquiring a bloody nose in its 1962 border war with China over disputed territories in the Himalayan region.

Following its defeat in a conventional war, its leaders concluded that only possession of atomic weapons would deter Beijing from invading again.

By so doing, they underlined a growing belief in the deterrent power of nuclear arms – a route by which militarily inferior countries could hope to deter

their superior rivals or enemies.

Pakistan, engaged since 1947 in a bitter struggle with India over the status of the disputed province of Kashmir, was a case in point.

Well aware of their country's inferiority to India in population and economic development, Pakistan's leaders knew that it would be no match in conventional warfare. The only way to achieve parity with their larger, more powerful neighbor was by acquiring nuclear weapons.

So they started a clandestine nuclear-arms program in the late 1970s, reaching their goal a decade later. They waited, however, to test their first bomb until after India had officially admitted to doing so in May 1998.

A year later, fighting between Indian and Pakistani troops in the Kargil region of Indian-administered Kashmir did not escalate into an all-out war because both sides were nuclear-armed, with their leaders seemingly prepared to use their arsenals in extremis.

The episode, frightening as it was, reassured Pakistani officials that their country was now secure from being overpowered by India. In the mid-1950s, the same reasoning had led Israeli leaders to pursue the nuclear path. Uncertain about how long they could maintain their edge over the combined forces of their Arab neighbors in conventional weaponry and the quality of their troops, they concluded that an effective deterrent for a beleaguered country was the atomic bomb.

Indeed, during the early days of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, when the Israelis were caught off-guard and invading

Arab armies made striking gains, the government ordered its entire arsenal, then 25 atomic bombs, mounted on specially adapted bombers. Those bombers never took off, in part, because the swift airlifting of military hardware and ammunition from the U.S. soon helped turn the tide in Israel's favor.

In short, Israeli leaders equipped their military with atomic arms to ensure the survival of the State of Israel. Such a process, once started, never ceases. By now, Israel reportedly has an arsenal of at least 200 nuclear bombs.

More recently, North Korea's leader Kim Jong-Il has acted in a similar fashion. In January 2002, he noted with alarm the way his country was included in an "Axis of Evil" – along with Iraq and Iran – by George W. Bush in his State of the Union Address. "States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world," the President said. "By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger."

Bush had already reversed the Clinton administration's policy of engagement (launched in conjunction with the South Korean government) on the issue of the North Korean nuclear program and had overseen the virtual termination of the 1994 agreement to supply North Korea with two light-water nuclear reactors at the cost of \$4.6 billion in return for a nuclear freeze.

North Korea retaliated by expelling IAEA inspectors and withdrawing from the nuclear NPT in 2003 – the year the Bush administration launched its inva-

sion of Iraq and overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime, claiming it had an ongoing nuclear-weapons program that endangered the United States. (It didn't.)

Kim Jong-Il then accelerated his country's nuclear program, testing a device in October 2006. By so doing, he strengthened his hand to ensure the survival of his regime. Thus did another minor state in search of survival insurance join the nuclear club.

Iran plays the nuclear card

With Saddam's regime destroyed and North Korea armed and dangerous, Iran was the member of that "axis" left exposed to the prospect of regime change. Partly to avoid Saddam's fate, Iranian leaders signed the IAEA's Additional Protocol in October 2003, giving the watchdog body authority to conduct constant on-site inspections.

A series of reports by the agency followed. In essence what these said was: While the IAEA inspectors had not found evidence proving that Iran was pursuing a nuclear-weapons program, they could not give it a clean bill of health either because Iran had not answered all questions satisfactorily. In the words of an IAEA official in Vienna, "The facts don't support an innocent or guilty verdict at this point."

The starting point in the nuclear-fuel cycle is the enrichment of uranium, allowed by the NPT. A low figure of 5% enrichment makes uranium suitable for generating electricity; at the high end, 90% is needed to produce a nuclear weapon.

The same machine – a centrifuge –

Israeli leaders equipped their military with atomic arms to ensure the survival of the State of Israel. Such a process, once started, never ceases

THE SURVIVAL GAME

Anyone even suggesting that the U.S. give up this right would be laughed off the premises. Indeed, the Bush administration continues to update and upgrade its vast nuclear arsenal, attempting, for instance, to develop bunker-busting atomic weapons for possible future use against Iran's nuclear facilities

yields results at both ends of the spectrum.

From the Iranian leaders' viewpoint, surrendering their right to enrich uranium, as demanded by the Bush administration and its allies, means giving up the path to a nuclear weapon in the future. Yet, the history of the past half century indicates that the only effective way to deter Washington from overthrowing their regime is by developing – or, at least, threatening to develop – nuclear weaponry.

Little wonder that they consider giving up the right to enrich uranium tantamount to giving up the right to protect their regime. (Anyone even suggesting that the U.S. give up this right would be laughed off the premises. Indeed, the Bush administration continues to update and upgrade its vast nuclear arsenal, attempting, for instance, to develop bunker-busting atomic weapons for possible future use against Iran's nuclear facilities.)

Reassure Iran's leaders

If the U.S. were to give Iran cast-iron guarantees of non-aggression as well as of non-interference in its domestic affairs – just as North Korea, armed with atomic bombs, is demanding – that would undoubtedly reassure Iran's leaders and form a real basis for resolving the problem of that country's nuclear activities.

After receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2005, IAEA chief Muhammad El Baradei said:

“Part of the negotiations should be providing Iran with security assurances. I hope ... that the United States

at a certain point will become more engaged. We look at the United States to do the heavy lifting in the area of security.”

Now, Baradei is once more offering pragmatic advice. He has proposed that the U.S. and its allies should consider allowing Iran limited enrichment rights within its own boundaries.

He argues that, since the Iranians have already successfully enriched uranium, the Security Council's demand that it stop doing so has become redundant. Instead, the world body should focus on seeing that Iran conducts its enrichment activities under IAEA supervision and that, unlike North Korea, it does not withdraw from the nuclear NPT.

As it is, U.S. credibility in Tehran is low. On the eve of the January 1981 release of the hostages taken at the U.S. embassy in November 1979, the U.S. agreed in the Algiers Accord not to interfere in Iran's internal affairs.

In December 1995, however, it began violating that agreement when, following the passage of a directive by Congress sanctioning \$18 million for a covert action program against Iran, the Clinton White House announced that the sum would be spent inter alia to cultivate new enemies of the Islamic regime.

Since then that annual sum has risen to \$75 million and the Bush White House has launched a series of covert operations to undermine the Iranian regime, dispatched aircraft-carrier strike forces through the Straits of Hormuz in classic gunboat-diplomacy fashion, and had its Vice President

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issue a series of warnings to Iran from the deck of the USS John C. Stennis, floating barely 150 miles off the Iranian coast.

The Iranian response, despite public denials, has been to play the single card that history has stamped “effective” since 1949 – raising the specter of a nuclear-armed Iran. It is a classic act of self-defense guaranteed to spread nuclear arms to other countries in a MAD

world where Catch-22 is the nuclear rule of the day. **CT**

Dilip Hiro is the author of many books on the Middle East, including The Iranian Labyrinth (Nation Books). His latest book is Blood of the Earth: The Battle for the World's Vanishing Oil Resources (Nation Books).

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It is a classic act of self-defense guaranteed to spread nuclear arms to other countries



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HOW NOT TO COUNTER TERROR

BY COLEEN ROWLEY

As anyone who has worked in the federal bureaucracy could immediately recognize, the creation of DHS was clearly a gross misstep on a purely pragmatic level

Colleen Rowley is a former FBI agent who gained national attention when she testified before the 2002 Senate Judiciary Committee on mistakes made before 9/11 and the detection of terrorism. She is a member of the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS. Five years after that testimony, she looks at the US government's actions on the prevention of terrorism

Given the effort that many of us have put into suggestions for reform, how satisfying it would be, were we able to report that appropriate correctives have been introduced to make us safer. But the bottom line is that the PR bromide to the effect that we are “safer” is incorrect. We are not safer. What follows will help explain why.

Wrong-headed actions and ideas had already taken root before that Senate hearing on June 6, 2002. Post 9/11 dragnet-detentions of innocents, official tolerance of torture (including abuse of U.S. citizens like John Walker Lindh), and panic-boosting color codes,

had already been spawned from the mother of all slogans – “The Global War on Terror” – rhetorically useful, substantively inane. GWOT was about to spawn much worse.

Within a few hours of the Senate hearing five years ago, President George W. Bush reversed himself and made a surprise public announcement saying he would, after all, create a new Department of Homeland Security. The announcement seemed timed to relegate to the “in-other-news” category the disturbing things reported to the Senate earlier that day about the mistakes made during the weeks before 9/11.

More important, the president’s decision itself was one of the most egregious examples of the doing-something-for-the-sake-of-appearing-to-be-doing-something-against-terrorism syndrome.

As anyone who has worked in the federal bureaucracy could immediately recognize, the creation of DHS was clearly a gross misstep on a purely pragmatic level. It created chaos by

throwing together 22 agencies with 180,000 workers – many of them in jobs vital to our nation’s security, both at home and abroad.

It also enabled functionaries like the two Michaels – Brown and Chertoff – to immobilize key agencies like the previously well-run Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), leading to its feckless response to Hurricane Katrina.

Radical, reckless departures

There were so many other mis-steps, so much playing fast and loose with the law, that it is hard to know where to begin in critiquing the results. One transcendent error was the eagerness of senior political appointees to exploit the “9/11-Changed-Everything” chestnut to prime people into believing that effective detection and disruption of terrorism required radical departures from rules governing our criminal justice and intelligence collection systems.

Departures from established law and policies were introduced quickly. Many of the worst of these came to light only later – extraordinary rendition, “black-site” imprisonment, torture, and eavesdropping without a warrant. (We now know that senior Justice Department officials strongly objected to the eavesdropping program.)

The first protests came from those most concerned with human rights and constitutional law. But, by and large, the fear-laden populace “didn’t get it.” The prevailing attitude seemed to be, “Who cares? I want to be safe.”

Everyone wants security. But all too

few recognize that security and liberty are basically flip sides of the same coin. Just as there can be no meaningful liberty in a situation devoid of security, there can be no real security in a situation devoid of liberty.

It took a bit longer for pragmatists to observe and explain how the draconian steps departing from established law and policy – not to mention the knee-jerk collection and storing of virtually all available information on everyone – are not, for the most part, helping to improve the country’s security.

The parallel with the introduction of officially sanctioned torture is instructive. TV programs aside, many if not most Americans instinctively know there is something basically wrong with torture – that it is immoral as well as illegal and a violation of human rights.

Pragmatists (experienced intelligence and law enforcement professionals, in particular) oppose torture because it does not work and often is counterproductive. Nevertheless, the president grabbed the headlines when he argued on Sept. 6, 2006 that “an alternative set of procedures” (already outlawed by the U.S. Army) for interrogation is required to extract information from terrorists. He then went on to intimidate a supine Congress into approving such procedures.

Virtually omitted from media coverage were the same-day remarks of the pragmatist chief of Army intelligence, Lt. Gen. John Kimmons, who conceded past “transgressions and mistakes” and made the Army’s view quite clear: “No

Everyone wants security. But all too few recognize that security and liberty are basically flip sides of the same coin

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Civilian casualties also serve to radicalize people and swell the terrorist ranks to the point where it becomes impossible for us to kill more terrorists than U.S. policy and actions create

good intelligence is going to come from abusive practices. I think history tells us that. I think the empirical evidence of the last five years, hard years, tells us that.” Who should enjoy more credibility in this area, Bush or Kimmons?

The War on [fill in the blank]

“War! Huh... What is it good for? Absolutely nothing!” This 1969 song lyric turns out to be even more applicable to Bush’s “global war on terror” than to the Vietnam War.

As for “The War on Drugs,” that one was readily recognized as little more than a catchy metaphor helpful in arguing for budget increases. But the use of our armed forces for war in Iraq was guaranteed to be self-defeating and to increase the terrorist threat.

● Military weapons are inherently rough, crude tools. Our rhetoric makes bombs and missiles out to be capable of “surgical strikes,” but such weapons also injure and kill innocent men, women, and children, taking us down to the same low level inhabited by terrorists who rationalize the killing or injuring of civilians for their cause. Civilian casualties also serve to radicalize people and swell the terrorist ranks to the point where it becomes impossible for us to kill more terrorists than U.S. policy and actions create. (In one of his leaked memos, former defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld asked about that; he should have paused long enough to listen to the answer.) This inherent “squaring of the error” problem in applying military force in this context has been a boon to terrorist recruitment, and has spurred activity to

the point of having actually quadrupled significant terrorist incidents worldwide.

● Declaring “war” on the tactic of terrorism elevates to statehood what actually may be scattered, disorganized individuals, sympathizers, and small groups. It empowers the terrorists as they add to their numbers and provides the status of statehood to what often should be regarded and treated as a rag-tag group of criminals.

● There is, of course, political advantage for a “war president” to rally Americans around the flag, but the negatives of the axioms “truth is the first casualty of war” and “all’s fair in love and war” far outweigh any positives. Ultimately, the recklessness and cover-up mid-wifed by the “fog of war” (everything from the friendly fire that killed Pat Tillman to the torture at Abu Ghraib and other atrocities) just magnify the “squaring the error” effect. Judicialness – and just plain smarts – tend to be sacrificed for quick action.

● Perhaps the most insidious blowback from war is that it weakens freedom and the rule of law inside the country waging it. James Madison was typically prescient in warning of this: “No nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare;” and “If Tyranny and Oppression come to this land, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy.”

Fire hose to Niagara to tsunami

Administration pressure on intelligence collection agencies, together with an extraordinary lack of professionalism and courage in the senior ranks of such

agencies, have resulted in not only over-reaching the law, but over-collecting information.

Those on the front lines striving to prevent future attacks face the kind of pressure a soccer goalie would feel trying to keep the other team from scoring when his own team's offense is off playing in an adjacent field – as when President George W. Bush sent our offense to invade Iraq, the wrong country with negligible ties to terrorism.

Facing that kind of pressure, and lacking strong professional coaching, the defense can feel hopelessly out-matched, leading to still further mishap.

Former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld spoke of the difficulty of getting a sip from the fire hose of intelligence being collected and flowing through the system. The stream of intelligence before 9/11 was also described by others as gushing from a fire hose, rendering it hard to find the dots, much less connect them – making it impossible, for example, to find, translate, and disseminate until 9/12 a key 9/11-related intercept acquired shortly before the attacks.

Compounding the problem is the FBI's unenviable record in acquiring computer technology to facilitate its work – witness the junking of a computerized records system two years ago after wasting \$170 million on defense contractors hired to create the system.

But the fire hose soon became Niagara Falls. FBI Director Robert Mueller set the tone early on as he kept telling Congress, "The greatest threat is from al Qaeda cells in the U.S. that we have

not yet identified." (sic)

Blindly following Mueller's White House-induced fixation with the "greatest" (though not yet "identified") threat, the FBI diverted about half its agents and other resources from areas like violent crime to work on terrorism.

Small wonder, then, that tons of additional data have been collected as a result, for example, of the "No-Tip-Will-Go-Uncovered" policy and the hundreds of thousands of National Security Letter requests. And who is surprised that most of that tonnage will never be evaluated?

Growing threat from Al Qaeda

There is no denying that the threat from Al Qaeda has grown over the past five years, and today probably better fits the earlier inflated warnings of multiple terrorist cells already in place in the U.S. Hard questions must be asked, however, when it appears as though collectors are being paid by the ream, while the drowning analysts go down for the third time.

Extraneous, irrelevant data clutter the system, making it even harder for analysts to make meaningful future connections.

A needle is hard enough to find in the proverbial haystack, without adding still more hay. And once the extra hay is piled onto the stack – by adding still more names to the 40,000-plus already on the "no-fly list," for example – there doesn't seem to be any way of reducing it.

Ask Northfield (Minnesota) Police Chief Gary Smith and other law enforcement officers whose very common

Compounding the problem is the FBI's unenviable record in acquiring computer technology to facilitate its work – witness the junking of a computerized records system two years ago after wasting \$170 million on defense contractors hired to create the system

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If this were not enough, we learn that the terrorist watch list compiled by the FBI and the National Counterterrorism Center is out of control, having apparently swelled to include more than half a million names

names have gotten onto this seemingly indelible list and who get stopped every time they try to fly.

Ghost of Poindexter

Just when it appears this insanity cannot get any worse, here come still more dots. Recent news reports indicate that the FBI – presumably having hired different contractors this time around – is compiling a massive computer database that will hold 6 billion records by 2012. This equals 20 separate “records” for each man, woman and child in the United States.

“The universe of subjects will expand exponentially” is the proud spin being put on this recycled version of the Pentagon’s discredited “Total Information Awareness” program, which was launched after 9/11 with the goal of compiling records from a wide array of electronic transactions. (The Big Brother project, which was put under the direction of Iran-Contra figure John Poindexter, was shelved, but not entirely scrapped, after encountering strong congressional resistance.)

Data-mining experts are not convinced this new program is worth the effort. Since there are so few known terrorist patterns of behavior, one specialist has written that this kind of search would not only needlessly infringe on privacy and civil liberties, but also waste taxpayer dollars and misdirect still more time and energy by “flood[ing] the national security system with false positives – suspects who are truly innocent.”

If this were not enough, we learn that the terrorist watch list compiled by

the FBI and the National Counterterrorism Center is out of control, having apparently swelled to include more than half a million names. So instead of trying to get a sip from a fire hose, or from Niagara Falls, the data-mining challenge is going to be more like sipping from a tsunami.

The good news is that this predicament is creating unusual consensus among people concerned with human rights and those dealing with pragmatic law enforcement. As one specialist on civil liberties observed recently, “There’s a reason the FBI has a ‘Ten Most Wanted’ list, right? We need to focus the government’s efforts on the greatest threats. When the watch list grows to this level, it’s useless as an anti-terror tool.”

Quantity cannot substitute for quality. Higher quality data collection depends not only on better guidance with respect to relevance, but also on judiciousness applied from the beginning and throughout the collection process.

Unfortunately, case and statutory law has come to be regarded as some kind of nicety – or a barrier that needs to be overcome. Not so. That law sets standards of relevancy for collection that used to hold down data clutter.

One might view the process of investigation, intelligence collection, increased intrusiveness, and erosion of liberties as a pyramid with the least intrusive actions and methods on the bottom of the pyramid entailing little or no interference with one’s civil liberties.

As a suspect proceeds up the pyramid from being the target of an investi-

gation, to temporary detention, interview, search, arrest, and finally subject to criminal charges and long-term incarceration, each higher level of intrusiveness should correspond to a greater amount of evidence.

What the “war on terrorism” has done, however, to a large extent, is simply invert this pyramid on its head, allowing long-term incarceration with little or no corresponding evidence.

In the past, general awareness that collected data could either become publicly known through criminal processes (criminal discovery), or through a plain Freedom of Information/Privacy Act request, built an extra degree of judiciousness into data collection. Classifying all information about international terrorism secret, perpetually secret, which is the current practice, removes this natural safeguard.

Former FBI agent Mike German, whose life depended on government secrecy when he was working undercover in domestic terrorism investigations, has an acute understanding of the need for operational secrecy in undercover work.

At the same time, German has pointed to the pitfalls of secrecy where it is not essential, and has emphasized the importance of transparency within the government, even when conducting sensitive operations:

“While my activities were covert during the operational phase of my undercover work, I knew from day one that I would have to be able to defend in court my actions. This gave me extra incentive to do everything by the book,

so as to avoid the kind of mistakes or over-reaching that could prejudice efforts to bring domestic terrorists to justice. Operations designed with the understanding that they can remain forever secret do not require this kind of diligence and this can easily lead to abuse.”

What about emergencies?

J. Edgar Hoover’s vision during the early part of his 48-year control of the FBI not only led to creating the fingerprint identification system, but he also brought in highly professional agents who could then be trained and trusted to conduct their own investigations and law enforcement actions without unnecessary interference from superiors.

The FBI became the role model for law enforcement due to its insistence on high educational standards and continuing legal and professional training. Thus, before the “Miranda Rule” became law as the protocol for conducting interrogations, the FBI had already voluntarily adopted and implemented such a procedure as part of its professional approach to interrogation.

At the same time, the law of criminal procedure, including search and seizure, interrogation, and the right to an attorney, need not be a barrier to effective investigation (or to the prevention of crime or terrorist acts), because “emergency exceptions” have already been carved into that law.

So, for example, if an FBI agent finds him/herself outside a home with probable cause to believe that evidence of a crime exists inside and is being de-

Classifying all information about international terrorism secret, perpetually secret, which is the current practice, removes this natural safeguard

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unlike TV-glorified "ticking-bomb torture," there have in fact been cases in which a kidnap victim's life was in serious, time-sensitive jeopardy. One such kidnap victim was buried alive with limited oxygen supply

stroyed, that agent can legally conduct a search pursuant to the "exigent circumstances" exception in the law, without having to wait for a court warrant.

Similar emergency exceptions exist under the statutes for monitoring of wire and/or electronic communications. This is one reason why it was difficult for us to understand why President Bush decided simply to ignore the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) in ordering warrantless surveillance that included U.S. citizens.

There is in that law an explicit exception allowing emergency monitoring up to 72 hours if, for example, a cell phone of an al Qaeda operative were suddenly discovered.

For some reason the media have not done a good job of informing the American people about this exception. Those of us who are aware of it have difficulty avoiding the conclusion that the president's decision to violate FISA means the surveillance program is so intrusive and all-encompassing that it could not bear scrutiny.

Unconstitutional and illegal

The program has already been ruled both unconstitutional and illegal by U.S. District Judge Anna Diggs Taylor but, despite that, continues in operation.

The FISA emergency exception is not hard to obtain; it simply requires that the Attorney General approve. That approval is what my colleagues in the Minneapolis field office desperately sought in mid-August 2001 so that they could search the personal effects and

computer of Zacarias Moussaoui, who was already in the custody of our immigration service.

The approval was denied for reasons that make little sense. Suffice it to point out a supreme irony here: because FBI headquarters personnel were reluctant, for whatever reason, to seek this emergency case-specific authority from the Attorney General and because the attacks of 9/11 were not thwarted, the net result was a presidential decision to ignore FISA altogether and institute a surveillance program in clear violation of the Fourth Amendment as well as FISA, as Judge Taylor has ruled.

A similar exception covering life-and-death situations allows law enforcement officers to dispense with the protection ordinarily afforded by Miranda warnings. The way the so-called "ticking-bomb scenario" has been disingenuously used to justify torture makes one reluctant to mention a scenario in which something like it might apply.

However, unlike TV-glorified "ticking-bomb torture," there have in fact been cases in which a kidnap victim's life was in serious, time-sensitive jeopardy. One such kidnap victim was buried alive with limited oxygen supply.

In such cases, the normally required Miranda warning-protection can legally give way to the need to protect the life or lives hanging in the balance. What often gets blurred here, sometimes deliberately by advocates of torture, is the significant difference between the issue of truly involuntary confession – one produced by torture,

for example, and thus with no guarantee of reliability – and the much larger area that is protected by the prophylactic Miranda Rule.

Delegate down

Judicious application of any emergency exception, of course, must obtain in order to prevent such exceptions from swallowing the rule. In the past, individual law enforcement officers have been trained and trusted to behave in such a way as to prevent that.

Some of us VIPS were trained to use deadly force under narrow “emergency” circumstances when an imminent threat existed to our lives or to other innocent victims and there was no reasonable alternative to stopping the imminent threat.

This delegation-down, this investing of trust in junior officers to exercise the enormous power of using lethal force under limited circumstances and after sufficient training, is necessary in order to protect their own and others’ lives.

So, too, it can be argued that investigators and intelligence gatherers should be trained to spot the type of life-and-death circumstances that might allow them to conduct an emergency search without a warrant or to dispense with Miranda protections.

The existence under current law of these “emergency exceptions” means there is no need to paint over civil liberties with a broad brush from on high, in order to effectively detect and disrupt terrorism.

Despite the intense political and PR pressures, it is extremely unwise to allow the pendulum to swing in the

reckless way it did post 9/11:

- From ranking terrorism as the Justice Department’s lowest priority in August 2001 to establishing it as the FBI’s only real priority now. (Despite the word games, anything that consumes half of the FBI’s resources is its only real priority).

- From ignoring specific instances where emergency action under the law (FISA, for example) was warranted to now simply ignoring long-standing law.

- From the failure to follow up promptly on specific, well predicated tips pre-9/11 to the “No-Tip-Will-Go-Uncovered” tsunami post 9/11.

- From training interrogators on the finer points of the Miranda Rule to training on torture techniques.

The bottom-line result of this pronounced pendulum swing is not only that our own constitutional and legal protections are jeopardized as seldom before, but also that – far from bringing any real benefit – these practices impede efforts to find and stop actual terrorists, and they lengthen the waiting lines at al Qaeda recruiting centers.

CT

This essay was signed by the Steering Group of the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS): Coleen Rowley, former FBI special agent; Tom Maertens, former NSC Director for Nonproliferation and former Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of State; Larry Johnson, former CIA analyst and former counterterrorism manager, Department of State; and Ray McGovern, former CIA analyst.

It can be argued that investigators and intelligence gatherers should be trained to spot the type of life-and-death circumstances that might allow them to conduct an emergency search without a warrant

WHY AREN'T REPORTERS TALKING TO IRAQIS?

BY JOHUA HOLLAND & RAED JARRAR

None of the reporters we read bothered to pick up a phone and call Baghdad to get reactions from, well, actual Iraqis

On May 25, George Bush signed a defense bill that outlawed the construction of (new) permanent bases in Iraq. But only five days later, White House press flack Tony Snow told reporters that the president is now modeling the future of his bloody signature project on the half-century U.S. experience in South Korea, with troops in Iraq for the long haul to provide, in Snow's words, "a security presence" and to serve as a "force of stability."

Asked how long that commitment would last, Snow said, "A long time." Tens of thousands of U.S. troops have been stationed in South Korea since 1953 – for 54 years.

In the days that followed Snow's revelation, senior Pentagon officials weighed in with their support for applying the Korea Model to Iraq: keeping a few divisions of U.S. troops in-country for the next five decades or so sounded just about right to them.

It was such a naked acknowledgement of America's long-term designs on carving out a strategic foothold in the

region that even the milquetoast American press had to acknowledge it, and most of the major news outlets ran stories in the last week that at least touched on the Iraq hawks' shiny new analogy.

But we noticed something fascinating when reading those articles: In story after story, U.S. reporters were quick to seek comment from White House officials and to "balance" those comments with quotes from congressional Democrats and from analysts at various D.C. think tanks who are critical of the administration. They talked to foreign policy and military experts, historians and even Korea experts.

But here's the rub: None of the reporters we read bothered to pick up a phone and call Baghdad to get reactions from, well, actual Iraqis.

So we did – we called Iraqi lawmakers from different parties representing the country's different ethnic and sectarian groups, and found that, without exception, just hearing that there were official whispers in Washington about plans for a decades-long U.S. troop

presence in their country shocked and awed them, and not in a good way.

But it didn't only inflame the Iraqi nationalists with whom we spoke – politicians who have long opposed the occupation – it also absolutely incensed those officials who have been among the coalition's most vocal supporters. Even those who approve of George Bush's Middle East adventurism were infuriated by the idea and insulted that the administration would make the statement publicly.

But that was one viewpoint that didn't find its way into any of the stories we read. Which leads to a question: What would the reporting out of Iraq look like if all reporters embraced the simple idea that Iraqis' views on the future of their country are worth a few column inches or a couple of seconds on American television screens?

The New York Times' David Sanger, for example, wrote an analysis in which he quoted Tony Snow, Defense Secretary Robert Gates – Gates said, "The idea is more a model of a mutually agreed arrangement whereby we have a long and enduring presence but under the consent of both parties" – and a few anonymous "administration officials and top military leaders," all of whom favored the idea.

Among the "critics on the left" who Sanger quoted was Leslie Gelb, the former president of the Council of Foreign Relations. Gelb, who has on his resume a stint with the State Department and another with the Pentagon during Vietnam (Gelb was director of the project that produced the infamous Pentagon Papers), wasn't phased by the

plan's unmistakable whiff of empire; he simply had issues with the analogy. "It's just that Korea bears no resemblance to Iraq," he said, "There's no strategy that can create victory."

Sanger also quoted Donald L. Kerrick, whom he described as a "retired general who ... has now emerged as one of a cadre of generals criticizing Mr. Bush's strategy." But Kerrick must not have been in a terribly critical mood that day, as Sanger quoted him as saying only that "If we can make this like Korea, then we have been successful."

Sanger might have called Dr. Alaa Makki, a senior official in the reliably pro-occupation Iraqi Islamic Party, for his reaction. We reached him in Baghdad, and he was taken aback to hear of the talk coming out of the White House and the Pentagon. "I haven't heard about this," he said, "and I'm very surprised they'd make such statements without consulting with the Iraqi side."

After asking us to send him copies of the statements made by the White House and the Pentagon, he told us that his party is "against leaving any permanent bases in Iraq; in fact, we are for setting a timetable for a complete withdrawal of the MNF from Iraq." That was, again, a representative of the pro-occupation Iraqi Islamic Party.

Grand idea to stay

Washington Post staffer Ann Scott Tyson also chose to quote Snow and Gates for her piece, along with Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, who oversees daily military operations in Iraq. Odierno thinks staying in Iraq for a few

What would the reporting out of Iraq look like if all reporters embraced the simple idea that Iraqis' views on the future of their country are worth a few column inches or a couple of seconds on American television screens?

"I'm very surprised by these statements regarding leaving U.S. bases until the Judgment Day. This is a forced marriage – shouldn't they ask the bride first?"

dozen years is a grand idea. "That would be nothing but helping the Iraqi security forces and the government to continue to stabilize itself," he assured reporters at a Pentagon news conference. Most of the article focused on more details of the DoD's long-term designs as laid out by Odierno, but Tyson did get a dissenting view from Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a man who knows a lot about Beltway politics but presumably very little about the daily humiliation of living under foreign occupation.

Tyson might have put in a call to Dr. Mowaffak al Rubaie, Iraq's National Security Advisor and a close advisor to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Rubaie is neither a nationalist nor an opponent of the U.S. occupation – in fact he traveled to D.C. last month to lobby members of Congress against pulling out U.S. troops (he reportedly had a nice sit-down with neocon Joe Lieberman). At the time, he told the Times' Michael Gordon that he felt Iraq was "on the last mile of a walk toward success, and if they [Congress] let go and don't take our hand, I feel that we are going to lose everything."

But al Rubaie, too, was shocked when we asked him his reaction towards the Korea model. "I'm very surprised by these statements regarding leaving U.S. bases until the Judgment Day," he said. "This is a forced marriage – shouldn't they ask the bride first?" Rubaie said that he would get in touch with his contacts in the United States to inform them that the plans were simply "not acceptable."

We found the same theme in story

after story. Paul Richter's Los Angeles Times piece quoted the administration's flacks and Michael O'Hanlon from the Brookings Institution. The AP's Terence Hunt apparently couldn't find even one person who was critical of the Korea model for a quote, either in the United States or in Iraq, for his story, and while the Seattle Times staff got a quote from an unnamed aide to nationalist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, it was on a different topic entirely.

There were no comments about the Korea model by Iraqis in any of the stories we read. None of the reporters talked to Nassar al-Rubaie, the head of the Al-Sadr bloc in Iraq's parliament, who told us: "There is no Iraqi who will agree to keep permanent U.S. bases. Even the ones who are against the timetable for withdrawal oppose a long-term U.S. presence." He added: "These White House and Pentagon statements are completely unacceptable."

Powerful leader

And none of them spoke with Saleh al Mutlaq, the powerful leader of the Iraqi National Dialogue Front, who said of talk of a Korea model: "This will make the few Iraqis who still believe in a political solution lose hope." He warned that "planning to leave permanent bases will only increase our political and military problems."

We tried to reach all of the reporters cited in this story. Sanger and Hunt were out of town – presumably traveling with Bush in Europe – and Richter didn't return our calls by press time.

When we reached the Washington

Post's Ann Scott Tyson and asked her why there were no Iraqi voices in her story, she was somewhat taken aback by the question. She hadn't considered getting the views of any Iraqis, "because the story was focused on a shift in the administration's thinking here in Washington. It wasn't really focused on Iraqis, or their reaction."

She later added: "There's a limited number of viewpoints you can include." Tyson explained that it wasn't always possible to reach people in Iraq for a quote before deadline. It's a valid point, except that several of the articles we reviewed were analyses written several days after talk of the Korea model started kicking around D.C. When we asked if that were true in this case, she said it wasn't – it was primarily because the story wasn't "taking place in Iraq."

If Tyson and the other reporters had made some long-distance calls, they might have added a crucial bit of context to their stories: that regardless of what the White House may or may not have planned for the future of Iraq, the fact that they would even mention a 50-year strategy in public was profoundly bone-headed – far more so than Bush's infamous challenge to Iraqi insurgents to "bring 'em on!"

They would quickly have realized that talking about the Korea model is a godsend for the recruiters of Iraq's armed resistance groups and a profound betrayal of even the White House's closest allies in Baghdad – many of whom returned from exile during the Saddam era and are now struggling to convince the population

that they're not merely puppets of the Anglo-American occupation.

But they didn't make those calls, and that's an important part of how consent for throwing thousands of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars into an occupation of a distant land is manufactured here at home: It starts with the assumption that the story of the U.S. "intervention" in Iraq can be told by talking to military analysts and "senior administration officials" in D.C., but without ever hearing from the people living on the fringes of the American Empire. It not always intentional; it's a facet of our media culture: You talk to "serious" analysts in Washington if you want to be seen as serious yourself.

The result is that while more than six in ten Americans favor setting a timeline for getting troops out of Iraq (PDF), another one in three labors under the illusion that American soldiers are welcome in Iraq – that there are insurgents on one hand and Iraqis who support the coalition on the other. Where would the political fight over this four-year occupation be if it were widely understood that the vast majority of Iraqis – of all ethnicities and religious faiths and across the ideological spectrum – are united in at least one thing: their desire not to live under open-ended U.S. occupation. **CT**

Joshua Holland is a writer at AlterNet.com, where this essay first appeared. Raed Jarrar is Iraq consultant to the American Friends Service Committee. He blogs at Raed in the Middle.

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MYSTERY WOMAN OF JAKARTA

BY JOHN PERKINS

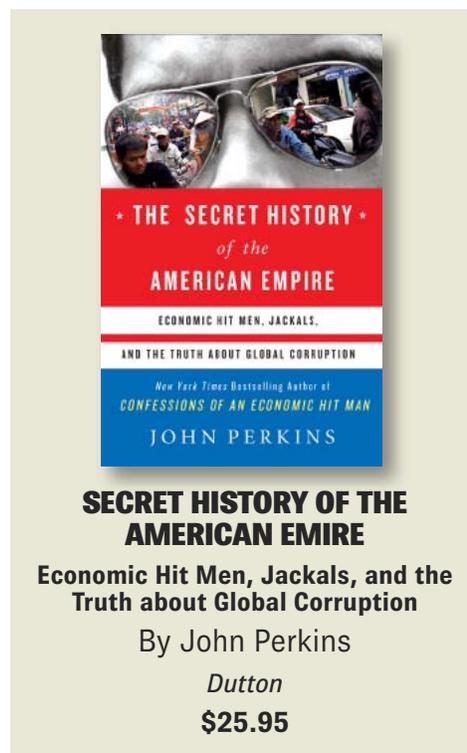
The nation's most clandestine spy organization concluded that I was a man whose passions could be channeled to help fulfill its mission of expanding the empire

This is an excerpt – Chapter 1 – of the book, Secret History of the American Empire, by John Perkins, recently published by Dutton.

I was ready to rape and pillage when I headed to Asia in 1971. At twenty-six, I felt cheated by life. I wanted to take revenge.

I am certain, in retrospect, that rage earned me my job. Hours of psychological testing by the National Security Agency (NSA) identified me as a potential economic hit man. The nation's most clandestine spy organization concluded that I was a man whose passions could be channeled to help fulfill its mission of expanding the empire. I was hired by Chas. T. Main (MAIN), an international consulting firm that did the corporatocracy's dirty work, as an ideal candidate for plundering the Third World.

Although the causes for my rage are detailed in *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, they can be summarized in a few sentences. The son of a poor prep-school teacher, I grew up surrounded



by wealthy boys. I was both terrified and mesmerized by women and, therefore, shunned by them. I attended a college I hated because it was what my mother and father wanted. In my first defiant act, I dropped out, landed a job I loved as a copy boy on a big city

newspaper, and then, tail between my legs, returned to college in order to avoid the draft. I married too young because it was what the one girl who finally accepted me demanded. I spent three years in the Amazon and Andes as an impoverished Peace Corps volunteer – once again forced to evade the draft.

I consider myself a true and loyal American. This too contributed to my rage. My ancestors fought in the Revolution and most other U.S. wars. My family was predominantly conservative Republican. Having cut my literary teeth on Paine and Jefferson, I thought a conservative was someone who believed in the founding ideals of our country, in justice and equality for all; I was angered by the betrayal of these ideals in Vietnam and by the oil company-Washington collusion that I saw destroying the Amazon and enslaving its people.

Why did I choose to become an EHM, to compromise my ideals? Looking back, I can say that the job promised to fulfill many of my fantasies; it offered money, power, and beautiful women, as well as first-class travel to exotic lands. I was told, of course, that I would be called upon to do nothing illegal. In fact, if I did my job well, I would be lauded, invited to lecture at Ivy League schools, and wined and dined by royalty. In my heart I knew that this journey was fraught with peril. I was gambling with my soul. But I thought I would prove the exception. When I headed for Asia, I figured I would reap the benefits for a few years, and then expose the system and be-

come a hero.

I have to admit, too, that I had developed a fascination for pirates and adventure at an early age. But I had lived the opposite type of life, always doing what was expected of me. Other than quitting college (for a semester), I was the ideal son. Now it was time to rape and pillage.

Indonesia would be my first victim.

The earth's largest archipelago, Indonesia consists of more than seventeen thousand islands stretching from Southeast Asia to Australia. Three hundred different ethnic groups speak more than 250 distinct languages. It is populated with more Muslims than any other nation. By the close of the 1960s we knew that it was awash in oil.

President John F. Kennedy had established Asia as the bulwark of anti-communist empire builders when he supported a 1963 coup against South Vietnam's Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem was subsequently assassinated and many people believed the CIA gave that order; after all, the CIA had orchestrated coups against Mossadegh of Iran, Qasim of Iraq, Arbenz of Venezuela, and Lumumba of the Congo. Diem's downfall led directly to the buildup of U.S. military forces in Southeast Asia and ultimately the Vietnam War.

Events did not transpire the way Kennedy had planned. Long after the U.S. president's own assassination, the war turned catastrophic for the United States. In 1969, President Richard M. Nixon initiated a series of troop withdrawals; his administration adopted a more clandestine strategy, focused on preventing a domino effect of one

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BOOK EXCERPT

We expected Suharto to serve Washington in a manner like that of the shah of Iran. The two men were similar: greedy, vain, and ruthless

country after another falling under communist rule. Indonesia became the key.

One of the principal factors was Indonesia's President Haji Mohammed Suharto. He had earned a reputation as a stalwart anti-Communist and a man who did not hesitate to use extreme brutality in executing his policies. As head of the army in 1965 he had crushed a Communist-instigated coup; the subsequent bloodbath claimed the lives of 300,000–500,000 people, one of the worst politically engineered mass murders of the century, reminiscent of those of Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung. Another estimated one million people were thrown into jails and prison camps. Then, in the aftermath of the killings and arrests, Suharto took over as president, in 1968.

When I arrived in Indonesia in 1971, the goal of U.S. foreign policy was clear: stop communism and support the president. We expected Suharto to serve Washington in a manner like that of the shah of Iran. The two men were similar: greedy, vain, and ruthless. In addition to coveting its oil, we wanted Indonesia to set an example for the rest of Asia, as well as for the entire Muslim world.

My company, MAIN, was charged with developing integrated electrical systems that would enable Suharto

and his cronies to industrialize and become even richer, and would also ensure long-term American dominance. My job was to create the economic studies necessary to obtain financing from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Soon after my arrival in Jakarta, the MAIN team met at the elegant restaurant on the top floor of the Hotel Intercontinental Indonesia. Charlie Illingworth, our project manager, summarized our mission: "We are here to accomplish nothing short of saving this country from the clutches of communism." He then added, "We all know how dependent our own country is on oil. Indonesia can be a powerful ally to us in that regard. So, as you develop this master plan, please do everything you can to make sure that the oil industry and all the others that serve it – ports, pipelines, construction companies – get whatever they are likely to need in the way of electricity for the entire duration of this twenty-five-year plan."

Most government offices in Jakarta in those days opened early, around seven a.m., and shut their doors at about two p.m. Their employees broke for coffee, tea, and snacks; however, lunch was postponed until the closing hour. I made a habit of rushing back to

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the hotel, changing into my bathing suit, heading for the pool, and ordering a tuna fish sandwich and cold Bintang Baru, a local beer. Although I dragged along a briefcase stuffed with official papers I had collected during my meetings, it was a subterfuge; I was there to work on my tan and ogle the beautiful young bikini-clad women, mostly American wives of oil workers who spent their weekdays in remote locations or executives with offices in Jakarta.

It did not take long for me to become enamored with a woman who appeared to be about my age and of mixed Asian-American heritage. In addition to her stunning physique, she seemed unusually friendly. In fact, sometimes the way she stood, stretched, smiled at me while ordering food in English, and dove into the pool appeared flirtatious. I found myself quickly turning away. I knew I must be blushing. I cursed my puritanical parents.

Every day, around four o'clock, approximately an hour and a half after my arrival, she was joined by a man who, I was certain, was Japanese. He arrived dressed in a business suit, which was unusual in a country where formal attire generally consisted of slacks and a well-pressed shirt, often made from local batik cloth. They chatted for a few moments and then departed together. Although I searched for them in the hotel bars and restaurants, I never saw them together or alone anywhere except at the pool.

One afternoon, as I rode the elevator to the ground floor, I steeled myself.

I would approach her, talk with her. I told myself there was nothing to lose, I knew she was married to the Japanese man and I just wanted to speak with someone in English. How could she possibly object? Once I made that commitment, I felt jubilant.

I strolled toward the pool with a buoyant sense of anticipation, humming a favorite song. But, as soon as I arrived, I stopped in my tracks, dismayed and confused. She was not in her usual place. I searched frantically around, but there was no sign of her anywhere. I dropped my briefcase next to a lounge chair and rushed into the surrounding gardens. I had never explored them before and now found that they were vast, bursting with orchids of every conceivable color, a profusion of birds-of-paradise, and bromeliads that dwarfed those I had seen in the Amazon; but all I could think about was my missed opportunity to admire them with her. Palms and exotic bushes formed little nooks and hideaways. I thought I spied her lying on a towel in the grass on the other side of a hedge. I raced around it – and managed to wake up a woman. She clutched her loose bikini top to her breasts, sat up, glared at me menacingly, her eyes accusing me of voyeurism, and shouted in a language I did not understand. I apologized as best I could and returned to the spot where I had left my briefcase.

When the waiter approached to take my order, I pointed at the vacant chair where she usually sat. He bowed, smiled, and picked up my briefcase to move it there for me.

I thought I spied her lying on a towel in the grass on the other side of a hedge I raced around it – and managed to wake up a woman. She clutched her loose bikini top to her breasts, sat up, glared at me menacingly, her eyes accusing me of voyeurism

BOOK EXCERPT

I held my breath, relieved that my theory about pool waiters was about to be confirmed

“No, no, tidak,” I said, still pointing. “The woman. Where is she?” I figured that it was part of a pool waiter’s job to know the habits of regular clients. I suspected the Japanese executive was a good tipper.

“No, no,” he repeated. “Tidak.”

“Do you know where she went?” I threw my hands out at my sides and shrugged in what I thought was a universal gesture.

He mimicked my movements, smiled idiotically, and parroted back my words, “Where she went.”

“Yes. Where?”

“Yes,” he repeated. “Where?” He shrugged again, his expression aping Alice in Wonderland’s Cheshire Cat. Then he snapped his fingers. “Yes.” He

laughed.

I held my breath, relieved that my theory about pool waiters was about to be confirmed.

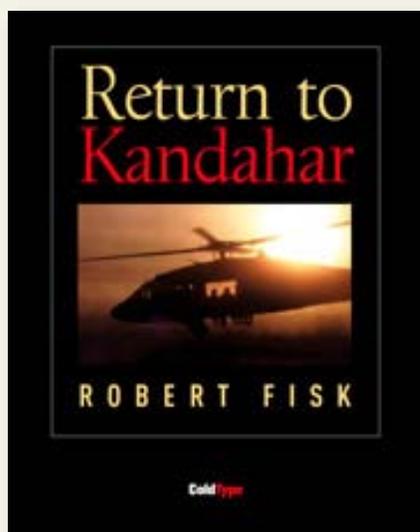
“Tunafich sanich and Bintang Baru,” he stated.

Deflated, I only managed to nod. He trotted off.

Four o’clock came and went. There was no sign of either her or the man who had always joined her. I trudged off to my room, showered, dressed, and headed out. I had to get away from this hotel. I would immerse myself in the local scene. **CT**

John Perkins’ previous best seller was Confessions of an Economic Hit Man, also published by Dutton.

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ROBERT FISK

RETURN TO KANDAHAR

To mark the anniversary of the Sept 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon and US-led 'war on terror,' Robert Fisk, Middle East correspondent of London's *Independent* returned to Afghanistan where he wrote scathing essays on a bombing offensive to rid the country of its Taliban rulers and Bin Laden's al-Qa'ida leaders.

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DOES THE USA HAVE AN OPPOSITION MEDIA?

BY WILLIAM BLUM

During the Cold War, if an American journalist or visitor to the Soviet Union reported seeing churches full of people, this was taken as a sign that the people were rejecting and escaping from communism. If the churches were empty, this clearly was proof of the suppression of religion. If consumer goods were scarce, this was seen as a failure of the communist system. If consumer goods appeared to be more plentiful, this gave rise to speculation about what was happening in the Soviet Union that was prompting the authorities to try to buy off the citizenry.

I'm reminded of this kind of thinking concerning Venezuela. The conservative anti-communist American mind sees things pertaining to Washington's newest *bête noir* in the worst possible light (to the extent they're even being sincere). If Chávez makes education more widely available to the masses of poor people, it's probably for the purpose of indoctrinating them. If Chávez invites a large number of Cuban doctors to Venezuela to treat the poor, it's

a sign of a new and growing communist conspiracy in Latin America, which includes Evo Morales, president of Bolivia. If Chávez wins repeated democratic elections ... here's the recent Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld: "I mean, we've got Chávez in Venezuela with a lot of oil money. He's a person who was elected legally just as Adolf Hitler was elected legally and then consolidated power and now is, of course, working closely with Fidel Castro and Mr. Morales and others." [1]

The latest manifestation of this mind-set is the condemnation of the Venezuelan government's refusal to renew the license of RCTV, a private television station.

This has been denounced by the American government and media, and all other right-thinking people, as suppression of free speech, even though they all know very well that the main reason, the *sine qua non*, for the refusal of the license renewal has to do with RCTV's unqualified support for the 2002 coup that briefly overthrew Chávez. If there was a successful mili-

"I mean, we've got Chávez in Venezuela with a lot of oil money. He's a person who was elected legally just as Adolf Hitler was elected legally and then consolidated power and now is, of course, working closely with Fidel Castro and Mr. Morales and others"

Can anyone name a single daily newspaper in the United States that is unequivocally opposed to US foreign policy? Can anyone name a single television network in the United States that is unequivocally opposed to US foreign policy?

tary coup in the United States and a particular TV station applauded the overthrow of the president (and the dissolving of Congress and the Supreme Court, as well as the suspension of the Constitution), and if then the coup was reversed by other military forces accompanied by mass demonstrations, and the same TV station did not report any of this while it was happening to avoid giving support to the counter-coup, and instead kept reporting that the president had voluntarily resigned ... how long would it be before the US government, back in power, shut down the station, arrested its executives, charging them under half a dozen terrorist laws, and throwing them into shackles and orange jumpsuits never to be seen again? How long? Five minutes?

The Venezuelan government waited five years, until the station's license was due for renewal. And none of the executives have been arrested. And RCTV is still free to broadcast via cable and satellite. Is there a country in the entire world that would be as lenient? [2]

It can be said that the media in Venezuela is a lot more free than in the United States. Can anyone name a single daily newspaper in the United States that is unequivocally opposed to US foreign policy? Can anyone name a single television network in the United States that is unequivocally opposed to US foreign policy? Is there a single daily newspaper or TV network in the entire United States that has earned the label "opposition media"?

Venezuela has lots of opposition media.

Don't believe everything you think!

"If the Democrat-controlled Congress wanted to force the Bush administration to accept a bill with a timeline for withdrawal from Iraq, it didn't have to pass the bill over Bush's veto. It just had to make clear that no Iraq War spending bill without a timeline would be forthcoming. Given that the Constitution requires Congress to approve all spending, Bush needs Congress's approval to continue the war. Congress does not need Bush's approval to end the war." [3]

The point is well taken, but with all the talk about funding or not funding the war, with all the bills in Congress, and the veto of a funding bill by the idiot king, I keep looking for an explanation of what exactly would happen in real life if funding for the war were "cut off". Would an accountant or lawyer from the Treasury Department or the Office of Management and Budget suddenly show up in Iraq, walk into the Green Zone, blow a whistle, and announce "This war has been suspended for lack of funding! Please go home." Would war manufacturers (also known humorously as defense manufacturers) refuse to supply their goods on credit? Not if they want future business. Would the Pentagon soon run out of guns and bullets, tanks and helicopters? How likely is that? They must have huge supplies on hand of almost everything because they never know when there will be a sudden and urgent need to bring freedom and democracy to some god-forsaken country in need. They must also have huge supplies of money on hand. And who's to

stop them from transferring money from one account to another? Does anyone believe that this administration – which we’ve all come to know and love, and respect for its integrity – does anyone believe that this gang of scoundrels would allow their hands to be tied?

In 1984, Congress cut off funding for the Reagan administration’s war in Nicaragua in support of the charming band of rapist-torturers known as the Contras. So what did the administration do? It raised money and arms covertly from foreign governments like Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, South Korea, apartheid South Africa, and Israel; as well as funding from domestic sources; and from extensive narcotics trafficking (sic). Would not the Busheviks be at least as resourceful? Halliburton, Bechtel, and Lockheed alone could finance the war.

The stain on humankind that does not go away

A report in the March issue of “Archives of General Psychiatry,” a journal of the American Medical Association, based on interviews of hundreds of survivors of the 1990s conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, concludes that “aggressive interrogation techniques or detention procedures involving deprivation of basic needs, exposure to adverse environmental conditions, forced stress positions, hooding or blindfolding, isolation, restriction of movement, forced nudity, threats, humiliating treatment and other psychological manipulations do not appear to be substantially different from physical torture in terms of

the extent of mental suffering they cause, the underlying mechanisms of traumatic stress, and their long-term traumatic effects.”

The report adds that these findings do not support the distinction between torture and “other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment” (an expression taken from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), often used in international human rights conventions and declarations. Although these conventions prohibit both types of acts, the report points out that “such a distinction nevertheless reinforces the misconception that cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment causes lesser harm and might therefore be permissible under exceptional circumstances.”[4]

These conclusions directly counter the frequent declarations by George W., the Pentagon, et al, that “We don’t torture.” They would have the world believe that psychological torture isn’t really torture; although they of course have often employed the physical kind as well, to a degree leading on a number of occasions to a prisoner’s death. (Justice Andrew Collins of the British high court: “America’s idea of what is torture is not the same as ours and does not appear to coincide with that of most civilized nations.”)[5]

The conclusions of the journal’s report do not, however, counter the argument of those like Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz who loves to pose the question: “What if a bomb has been set to go off, which will kill many people, and only your prisoner knows where it’s located. Is it okay to torture

They would have the world believe that psychological torture isn’t really torture; although they of course have often employed the physical kind as well, to a degree leading on a number of occasions to a prisoner’s death

If you open the window of torture, even just a crack, the cold air of the Dark Ages will fill the whole room

him to elicit the information?”

Humankind has been struggling for centuries to tame its worst behaviors; ridding itself of the affliction of torture is high on that list. Finally, an historic first step was taken by the United Nations General Assembly in 1984 with the drafting of the “Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment” (came into force in 1987, ratified by the United States in 1994). Article 2, section 2 of the Convention states: “No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.”

Such marvelously clear, unambiguous and principled language, to set a single standard for a world that makes it increasingly difficult to feel proud of humanity. We cannot slide back. If torture is broached as a possibility, it will become a reality. If today it’s deemed acceptable to torture the person who has the vital information, tomorrow it will be acceptable to torture his colleague who – it’s suspected – may know almost as much. Would we allow slavery to resume for just a short while to serve some “national emergency” or some other “higher purpose”?

“I would personally rather die than have anyone tortured to save my life.” – Craig Murray, former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, who lost his job after he publicly condemned the Uzbek regime in 2003 for its systematic use of torture. [6]

If you open the window of torture, even just a crack, the cold air of the

Dark Ages will fill the whole room.

A Cold Warrior's nightmare

Jack Kubisch died on May 7 in North Carolina. You probably never heard of him. He was a State Department Foreign Service Officer who served in Mexico, France, and Brazil, and as ambassador to Greece. At the time of the September 11, 1973 military coup in Chile which overthrew the democratically-elected socialist government of Salvador Allende, he was Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.

In the wake of the coup, Kubisch was hard pressed to counter charges that the United States had been involved.

“It was not in our interest to have the military take over in Chile,” he insisted. “It would have been better had Allende served his entire term, taking the nation and the Chilean people into complete and total ruin. Only then would the full discrediting of socialism have taken place. Only then would people have gotten the message that socialism doesn’t work. What has happened has confused this lesson.” [7]

Read that again. It’s as concise and as clear a description of the ideological underpinnings of United States foreign policy as you’re ever going to find publicly admitted to by a high-ranking American official.

Though based on a falsehood made up for the occasion – that Allende’s policies were leading Chile to ruin, which was not the case at all – Kubisch’s words articulate a basic goal of US foreign policy: preventing the rise of any society that might serve as a successful

example of an alternative to the capitalist model. Many underdeveloped countries were punished terribly during the Cold War by Washington for having such an aspiration; Cuba still is; better that such societies suffer “complete and total ruin” than achieve such a goal.

Washington knows no heresy in the Third World but genuine independence. In the case of Salvador Allende, independence came clothed in an especially provocative costume – a Marxist constitutionally elected who continued to honor the constitution. This would not do. It shook the very foundation stones upon which the anti-communist tower was built: the doctrine, painstakingly cultivated for decades, that “communists” can take power only through force and deception, that they can retain that power only through terrorizing and brainwashing the population. For Washington ideologues, There could be only one thing worse than a Marxist in power – an elected Marxist in power.

If you sometimes think that the stupidity, lies, hypocrisy, cynicism, cruelty, and arrogance could never have been as bad as now ...

Here is President George H.W. Bush, in a speech to the US Air Force Academy, May 29, 1991:

“Nowhere are the dangers of weapons of proliferation more urgent than in the Middle East. After consulting with governments inside the region and elsewhere about how to slow and then reverse the buildup of unnecessary and destabilizing weapons, I am today proposing a Middle East arms

control initiative. It features supplier guidelines on conventional arms exports; barriers to exports that contribute to weapons of mass destruction; a freeze now, and later a ban on surface-to-surface missiles in the region; and a ban on production of nuclear weapons material.”

The next day, (that is to say, the VERY next day, May 30, 1991), Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney (Whatever happened to him?) announced that the United States would give Israel \$65 million worth of US fighter planes and underwrite most of a new Israeli missile program. [8]

In that same speech, Bush, Sr. declared: “Our service men and women in the Gulf, weary from months in the desert, now help suffering Kurds.” The truth was that since the Gulf War fighting had ceased in February, the United States had been doing its best to suppress the Kurdish revolt against the rule of Saddam Hussein, a revolt which the Bush administration had openly encouraged for Kurds and Shiites in Washington’s perennial professed role of democratic liberators; but when the heat of the moment had cooled down, the prospect of a Kurdish autonomous area next to US ally Turkey and/or an Iraq-Iran-Shiite coalition next to the Saudi allies made successful revolts appear unpalatable to the United States. Accordingly, the Kurds and Shiites were left to their [not very nice] fates. But hey, that’s business.

Seconds later in his talk, Daddy Bush succeeded in pushing the following words past his lips: “We do not dictate the courses nations follow.”

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"Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest"

Denis Diderot, 18th century French philosopher and writer

Christopher Hitchens has a new book out, "God is not GREAT". It's a compilation of the many terrible things done in the name of God by various religions over the centuries, far in excess, the book posits, of the terrible things done by the secular world. The holy horrors continue today of course, perhaps worse than ever. If the leaders and would-be leaders of Lebanon, Pakistan, the United States, Israel, Palestine, Afghanistan, Somalia, and some other countries were secular humanists our poor old world would not appear to be another planet's hell. Organized religion has a lot to answer for.

I have no particular quarrel with the book's general theme. But when I first read a review of it I wondered how Hitchens dealt with Saddam Hussein and his secular government in Iraq. Here was a guy who was genuinely a baddie, but not a religious fanatic at all. The problem for Hitchens was compounded, for being an ardent supporter of the US war against Iraq he had to dispel the notion that the United States had overthrown a secular government. Hitchens, however, came up with a simple but elegant solution to both problems – He made Saddam and his regime "religious?"

Saddam, he writes, "had decked out his whole rule ... as one of piety and jihad" [against whom he doesn't say, and I can't either]. "Those who regarded his regime as a 'secular' one are

deluding themselves." [9]

There is now Islamic sharia law imposed in many parts of Iraq, with numerous horror stories of its enforcement against young men and women for their co-mingling, for their clothing, their music, dancing, etc. The number of family honor killings based on religion has jumped. Mosques and the buildings of other religions, including Christian Assyrians, have suffered many serious attacks.

These things were rare to non-existent under Hussein, when Shias and Sunnis regularly intermarried and Muslims did not need to escape from Iraq by the thousands in fear of other Muslims; neither did Jews or Christians. (In his last year or so in power, Hussein spoke in religious terms more often than earlier, but this appeared to be little more than paying lip service to the anger stirred up in Iraq, as elsewhere in the Middle East, by Washington's War on Terror.)

This, then, is what Hitchens' "Oh what a lovely war!" has given birth to. The irony for a person like him might be unbearable if he were not rescued by denial.

It will not have passed unnoticed that Hussein's Iraq is not the only secular government overthrown by the United States which led to a very religious successor. In Afghanistan in the 1980s and early 90s, the US masterminded the overthrow of the "communist" government, which led to rule by Islamic fundamentalists, from which the Taliban emerged.

Imperialist and capitalist fundamentalists also have a lot to answer for.

"Blessed are the peacemakers" ... though the FBI may conduct extensive surveillance of them.

And fill up fat files. You can read many of the files – peacemakers and others – in the FBI Reading Room at <http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/foiaindex.htm>

Among those whose files are there: The Beatles, Bertolt Brecht, Steve Allen, the ACLU, Ty Cobb, American Friends Service Committee, Lucille Ball, the Pacifica Foundation, Cole Porter, Elvis Presley, Carl Sagan, Charles Schulz, Frank Sinatra, Mickey Mantle, Groucho Marx, HL Mencken, NAACP, Ian Fleming, Vincent Foster, Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, Henry Wallace, Weatherman Underground, and hundreds of others, as well as the FBI's Terrorist Photo Album (1973-89).

Why, after all we know about his sordid career – and his keeping a Grand Canyon of files is but a minor, relatively harmless part of it – is the FBI Building still named after J. Edgar Hoover?

CT

NOTES

[1] Associated Press , February 4, 2006

[2] For further detail see: Bart

Jones, op-ed, Los Angeles Times, May 30, 2007; <http://www.venezuelanalysis.com>;

www.misionmiranda.com/rctv.htm

[3] Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), June 1, 2007, <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=3110>

[4] From a March 5, 2007 press release by the journal.

[5] The Guardian (London), February 17, 2006

[6] Testimony before the International Commission of Inquiry On Crimes Against Humanity Committed by the Bush Administration, session of January 21, 2006, New York

[7] Washington Post, October 21, 1973

[8] Los Angeles Times, May 31, 1991

[9] "god is not GREAT: How Religion Poisons Everything." page 25

William Blum is the author of Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2; Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower; West-Bloc Dissident: A Cold War Memoir; and Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire

Why, after all we know about his sordid career – and his keeping a Grand Canyon of files is but a minor, relatively harmless part of it – is the FBI Building still named after J. Edgar Hoover?

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DINNER WITH THE PRESIDENT?

BY WALTER C. UHLER

It was their words about a “disastrous new direction” that prompted me to RSVP this time

In May 24, 2007, just a day after returning from Russia, I received my fifth consecutive invitation to the annual President’s Dinner, held in Washington, D.C. Signed by Mitch McConnell, the Senate Republican Leader, and John “Crybaby” Boehner, the House Republican Leader, the form letter invitation opened as follows:

“Dear Walter,

They’ll be talking about this one for years.

The 2007 President’s Dinner will mark the turning point for our Republican Party.

On June 13th the most dedicated GOP leaders nationwide will gather under one banner and pledge a total commitment to victory in next year’s elections.

Walter, will you join President Bush for dinner in Washington?”

Judging by their form letter, Messrs. McConnell and Boehner are “betting” that I’ve “had enough” of Democrats (now in power), who “are appeasing the worst elements of their Party in a

pathetic display of retribution and cowardice.” Such Democrats are “more interested in embarrassing President Bush than solving problems.” Worse, “Democrats in Congress are introducing socialist, far-left legislation and using vitriolic rhetoric.”

Thus, unless people like me support President Bush – by reserving a table for eight (\$25,000) or purchasing an individual ticket (\$2,500) – we’ll soon “have a new President who, instead of vetoing liberal bills that raise taxes, expand welfare programs and cut military spending....could sign them all into law and take our nation in a disastrous new direction.”

It was their words about a “disastrous new direction” that prompted me to RSVP this time. You see, virtually any new direction, including virtually any disastrous new direction, would resemble a utopia, when compared with the Bush administration’s disastrous “old” direction that has brought our once great country to its knees. But rather than submit the RSVP as printed, I made a slight change to it.

Thus, whereas the original RSVP read:

Dear Senator McConnell and Congressman Boehner,

Thank you for inviting me to The 2007 President's Dinner. I understand the importance of the upcoming elections, and I'm committed to recapturing our Republican majority and maintaining a Republican White House. To do my part:

0 YES! I/We will attend The 2007 President's Dinner on Wednesday, June 13, 2007. I am enclosing:

*0 \$25,000 for a table of eight.
0 \$2,500 for a single ticket*

My amended RSVP read as follows:
Dear Senator McConnell and Congressman Boehner,

Thank you for inviting me to The 2007 President's Dinner. I understand the im-

portance of the upcoming elections, and I'm committed to assuring that not one Republican wins election who still supports the illegal, immoral Bush/Cheney war in Iraq. Which means:

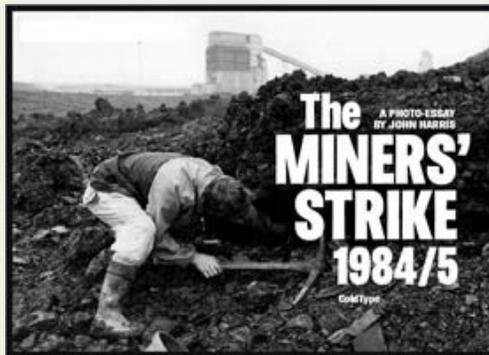
0 NO! I would not attend The 2007 President's Dinner on Wednesday, June 13, 2007, even if you paid me \$2,500. I am not enclosing:

*0 \$25,000 for a table of eight.
0 \$2,500 for a single ticket
Then I mailed it.*

CT

Walter C. Uhler is an independent scholar and freelance writer whose work has been published in numerous publications, including The Nation, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the Journal of Military History, the Moscow Times and the San Francisco Chronicle. He also is President of the Russian-American International Studies Association (RAISA).

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